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Goal formation : a relational dialectics perspective

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GOAL FORMATION: A RELATIONAL DIALECTICS PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

GOAL FORMATION: A RELATIONAL DIALECTICS PERSPECTIVE

by Ian S. Rice

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the way communication affects people's goals and the relationship between someone's goals and changing dynamics in relationships. Primary goals drive an interaction and are the purpose behind the communicative choices a person makes. Secondary goals shape and constrain the communicative choices a person makes by limiting what actions that person deems to be appropriate in achieving the primary goal. The primary / secondary goal structuring a person has is temporary because goals shift during interactions. An examination of the changing goal structure was conducted as confederates manipulated an explicit shift in the openness-closedness relational dynamic. Through the disclosure of a "secret," this openness-closedness relational dialectic was altered. Quantitative analysis demonstrated a change in participants' secondary goal structure, but no change in their primary goals. Interview data are used to support the statistical findings.

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My mother, father, and brother have inspired me and been fantastic role models. Rob, I have always looked up to you and learned a lot from you. Despite our minor difference in age, I think of you as a big brother and you have always been a great one. Mom and dad, of all the lessons you could have taught, you chose the most important. The lessons you taught of being a good, honest, ethical person will always be the most important learning in my life. Thank you.

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Chapter One:

Introduction

In everyday life, individuals experience a wide variety of factors and forces that define them as human beings. Since we were little, the relationships we had, affection we were shown, and dilemmas we faced shaped our definitions of self and worldviews. We consciously and subconsciously synthesize the events that transpire in our lives and turn them into dominant philosophies, thought patterns, and ways of acting. This thesis focuses on exactly that – the way forces throughout an individual's lifetime influence and help create her or his dynamic realities in life. It also examines how the ways we interpret, perceive, and act in these realities help to constantly create and sustain new realities. Life is a whirlwind of emotions, thoughts, actions, relationships, assumptions, patterns, and change. All of these help us understand, be a part of, and recreate the realities in which we live – and this understanding, taking part in, and recreating of realities happens through communication. Communication is the single, predominate aspect of life that empowers individuals to define themselves, understand others, and make sense of their place in the world. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the way communication affects people's goals and the relationship between someone's goals and changing dynamics in relationships.

The Nature of Communication

One of the world's most renowned atomic physicists from the 20th century, David Bohm, "argued that communication should not be understood as the 'attempt to *make common* certain ideas or items of information' but as the effort of two or more people to

'make something *in common*, i.e. create something new together" (cited in Stewart & Zediker, 2000, p. 227, emphasis in original). This takes a much different view of communication than the linear model of a person thinking, sending, receiving, and decoding – it is one that recognizes that communication creates and sustains the realities in which we live.

In order to understand the perspective of communication grounding this thesis, it is important to understand what is not meant by the term communication. Scholars have come a long way since originally looking at communication in a linear, information only-based definition. The traditional view of communication was based on the "transmission model," which shows how information is passed from one conversational participant to another. This model shows how information is gathered and transmitted by one person through a linear progression, sent through a channel of some sort (which could be verbal or non-verbal) and received by another person, decoded for understanding and finally, is understood. In this model, there is "noise" that interferes with the accuracy of the message and some models even showed "feedback" that was interpreted by both parties. People thought of communication as a means of passing information back and forth about an already objective world around us. Communication was looked at as a neutral vehicle for passing messages to each other. People aimed to prevent breakdowns in communication by providing clearer messages. The clearer the information, the easier it was to decipher the exact, original meaning.

A simple, one sentence example from a conversation of two people can demonstrate this model. Person A says to person B, "you look great in that pair of jeans."

The transmission model would show that person A looked at person B, assessed how those jeans looked on person B (source of information), processed the information, and transmitted it verbally. Encoding or transmitting the information would be the vocal mechanisms (lip and tongue movements, vocal cords, lungs, face muscles, etc. used by person A). Person B, the receiver, then hears the words from person A, decodes the message in her/his brain, and understands it (destination). This whole time there is "noise," which can be defined as anything that interferes with accurately understanding the information. This could be the lawn mower in the background, poor lighting so it is hard to see the face of person A, or the fact that person B does not like person A and is ignoring him/her. The more refined and complex transmission models include feedback as an additional factor that must be addressed. This includes head nods, smiles, frowns, etc., which influence the way both parties are incorporating and responding to the information. This model takes at its core, the belief that person A transmitted information about an objective reality to person B. One could say that person A did a relatively good job of transmitting clear information if her/his intent was to compliment person B. However, person A would have done a poor job of transmitting information if the true intention was to convince person B to wear those jeans whenever they went out together, but not when person B goes out with someone other than person A. This model also has at its core the idea that the meaning of the transmitted information is an objective fact. Mick Underwood (2003) presents a diagram of this model:

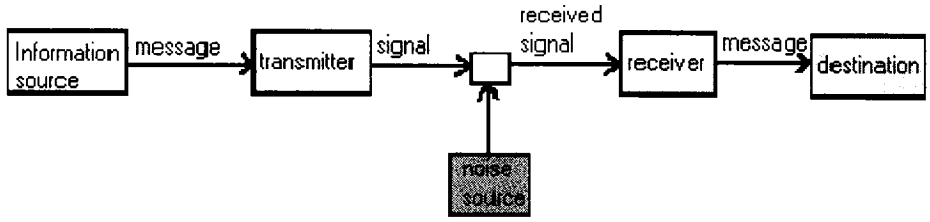

Figure 1. Diagram of the Shannon-Weaver, transmission model of communication.

People realized that this is not an accurate depiction of communication because several factors are neglected. While some argue that this model can account for such factors as the purpose of the transmitter, the knowledge of both people, including their relational history, the situational context, and even the cultural dynamics, which could be thought of as noise, this model has many faults. For example, even though this model accounts for some contextual factors, it neglects to examine the dynamic relation between the context and time, and how non-linear communication often is. The transmission model also fails to incorporate perception and the recognition that person C might think the jeans look horrible. But most importantly, it fails to recognize the creative power of communication. The transmission model fails to portray the influence of these words. That simple sentence could enhance the relationship between two arguing people, while at the same time it could have been said sarcastically and cause an argument. It could even be a statement that leads to a physical, sexual encounter. Whenever person B wears that pair of jeans (s)he might think back to this compliment and have an enhanced self-image. The simple sentence of, "you look great in that pair of jeans" can create new realities for both parties involved, and that is something that the transmission model does not capture. The transmission model fails to describe the spontaneous, interactive, in the

moment improvisations, the playing off of each other, the constantly transforming image of self and other.

Think of how the faults of the transmission model are exacerbated if the discussion is not about a typical, everyday conversation, but instead one of an abstract reality such as a discussion about morality, justice, or God. In these examples it has to be realized that the meaning of what is said is not an objective truth, but rather one of many possible interpretations of what someone means. The constitutive and creative power of communication must also be recognized. Every sentence uttered will transform understandings and shape future possibilities for how one can respond. Together people will create new understandings of their relationships, of morality, and of justice, rather than passing an objective meaning through the neutral vehicle of communication. This creative, transformative power of communication is in the forefront of what is lacking in the transmission model.

To realize that communication does not simply exist solely as a way of transmitting information back and forth, but instead is a process of co-creating realities is a drastic change in thinking. Even today many people view communication as a vehicle for transferring ideas, but communication does so much more – it actually creates those ideas. John Stewart (2005) points this out when describing the etymology of the word communicate, which comes from the "the Latin *commun* and the suffix 'ie,' which is similar to 'fie,' in that it means 'to make or to do.' So one meaning of 'to communicate' is 'to make something common'" (p. 47). Communication is not a neutral vehicle through which one person can pass meaning to another. Communication is loaded with

intent, beliefs and attitudes, predispositions, subtle hints, and information that is interpreted, reshaped, transformed and understood with a unique meaning. Meanings are not created by a sender and not assigned by a listener. Meanings are co-created by all involved parties, through a sharing of verbal and non-verbal communication and relational forces that include relational history, context, timing, and personal beliefs that the other party may not be aware of and that one might not even be aware of him or herself. Our lives, including our conceptions of self are created socially through communication. This view is the foundation for the inquiries in this study. Taking this communication perspective offers an expanded view of communication and its role as the foundation in all social interaction.

Not only are our worldviews and definitions of self created socially, but even more seemingly individualistic activities have been shown to be socially constructed. As an example, consider how you would respond if you were asked to recall a rebellious moment from your teenage years. If you thought of yourself as a container in which interaction deposits were made that you could recollect in exact form, you would think it possible to retrieve stored information much like you open a file from a computer. In actuality, the way in which you describe the event would be based upon whether you were recounting the event to a teacher, a prospective employer, your parents, a friend, a therapist, a romantic partner, someone you just met, or someone you have known for an extended period of time; your recollection and description would rely on the relationship you had with the other party. The response would also change depending on the context and your surroundings. If you were at a confessional at church you would probably share

the story in one way, while if you were at a party it would be another. A fascinating aspect relating to this is that each time you recall and describe an event you slightly alter your own recollection of it. Think of a simple game of "telephone" and how a message gets altered very quickly, or how different history would be if people could not rely on books. The history of any event would be remembered in a much different light if there were no books and no writing to help us remember the way we saw the event transpire. Memories are infrequently written down and are, therefore, a product of numerous social factors that influence our recollection of them. Memories are retroactively reshaped and recreated, which shows that our communication is not a neutral vehicle that transmits an objective reality since our realities are constantly changing. We actually are constantly reshaping our memories by communicating about them. As Sigman (1995) noted,

> Communication is not a neutral vehicle by which an external reality is communicated about, and by which factors of psychology, social structure, cultural norms, and the like are transmitted or are influential. The communication process (a) exerts a role in the personal identities and self-concepts experienced by persons; (b) shapes the range of permissible and impermissible relationships between persons, and so produces a social structure; and (c) represents the process through which cultural values, beliefs, goals, and the like are formulated and lived. (Sigman, 1995, p. 2, cited in Pearce & Pearce, 2004, p. 42)

This quote highlights the fact that communication does not simply transmit information. It creates information, as well as creates and fosters relationships, creates and sustains hierarchies of social roles and power structures, and creates and sustains self-identities. Only through communication can people create self-identities. We can only define ourselves in terms of others. Self-identities are often thought of as the conglomeration of all the values, beliefs and attitudes an individual holds. Everything from religious values, to beliefs about being an honest and trustworthy person, to an

attitude of optimism only makes sense in relation to other people. John Stewart (2005) stated that

> our ways of being, our 'selves,' are produced in our...ways of interrelating ourselves to each other...In other words, who we are—our identities—is built in our communicating. People come to each encounter with an identifiable "self," built through past interactions, and *as we talk,* we adapt ourselves to fit the topic we're discussing and the people we're talking with, and we are changed by what happens to us as we communicate...The point is that *identity-negotiation, or the collaborative construction of selves, is going on whenever people communicate."* (pp. 30-31, emphasis in original)

Communication not only helps us define and "know" ourselves, but it also helps us define and "know" others. The process of relating to others cannot happen without communication. The fact of the matter is that each time we communicate with another person, we redefine our self, our view of the other, and the relationship we co-create. Every time we utter a word in conversation, the word impacts both the other person as well as our own selves. The intricacies of this happen instantaneously and then continue to happen long after the interaction as we recollect and recreate our beliefs about the past. This view of communication has underpinnings of a social constructionist model. The key to this model is that individuals construct their definitions of self, others, and relationships through social interaction and this view of communication focuses on the creative, constitutive power of all social interaction.

Dialogue and Relational Dialectics

Following the progression from a transmission model of communication to a theoretical framework of social constructionism, communication researchers have moved from a more simplistic, monologic view of communication to a dualistic view, and finally to a dialogic view. Most research on relationships has focused on monologic (one-sided)

and dualistic (two-sided) views of relationships (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Research on relationships has had a chronological progression from monologic to dualistic thinking, but now researchers are advocating relational views that are more complex, yet more descriptive of the actual way relationships transpire (Altman, 1993; Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Chen, Drzewiecka, & Sias, 2001; Erbert, Perez, & Gareis, 2003; Hoppe-Nagao & Ting-Toomey, 2002; Kinser, 2003; Meyer, 2003; Powlowski, 1998; Rawlins, 1982; Shotter, 2000).

Monologic research examines the ways in which one-sided views of relational characteristics, such as self-disclosure (Hendrick, 1981) and certainty (Berger, 1979) improve relationships. From this view, individuals are seen as containers of certain relational skills and each of these skills can be identified and measured in order to determine relational progression to some predetermined end state. These monologic views of relationships have the goal of predicting the life cycle of relationships through a beginning, middle, and end phase. Relational communication is thought of as a means to achieving the end product of a functional, working relationship, often characterized by marriage (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 211). Researchers operating in a monologic framework search for the functional characteristics that will objectively define behaviors that enhance relationships. However, problems arise from this view since each relationship is different, and relational partners will not view the relationship in exactly the same way. Researchers have also noted that relationships do not simply progress in a linear fashion; relationships often digress, change directions, circle through a repeating pattern of characteristics, and merge with other relationships, which is a strong critique of

the transmission model of communication and monologic research. Thus, a fundamental error is committed by taking a one-sided predictive view of relationships that is too simplistic and does not view the relationship in its holistic entirety.

Dualistic perspectives frequently examine communication behaviors from the opposing viewpoint of monologic research. Whereas monologic research examines how closeness, interdependency, and certainty enhance a relationship, dualistic perspectives identify contradictions in this research and show how their opposites can also enhance relationships. For example, relational partners, including friends, family members, coworkers, and romantic partners, have needs for separateness, independence, and spontaneity, and these characteristics have been shown to enhance a relationship. These relationship characteristics are the focal points for dualistic researchers who choose to examine relational dimensions in an either/or fashion. This means that they examine the benefit or detriment to the relationship when a relational partner is either open or closed, honest or dishonest in a situation. The research does not examine how both openness and closedness, honesty and secrecy exist simultaneously and all contribute positively and negatively to the relationship. Instead, dualistic research examines how either honesty is present and how it is affecting the relationship, or how secrecy is present and is affecting the relationship.

Dualistic views expose inaccurate representations of relationships from the monologic perspective, but they also perpetuate inaccurate representations by ignoring important relational components. These components include the changing spatial-temporal existence of relationships, "multivocality," and the "the dynamic interplay of

opposing tendencies as they are interacted in interaction" (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 6). In other words, while the dualistic perspective has added a more complex and descriptive view of relationships than monologistic thinking, it still commits a fundamental error in not fully examining the full complexity of relationships.

Dialogue researchers choose to examine a more complex array of factors and how they intermingle and simultaneously affect each other. A dialogician realizes that while people can try their best to be completely open, it is impossible to be completely open at any given time. People always have hidden emotions or simply do not feel that aspects of themselves are worth sharing. This means that openness and closedness, or honesty and dishonesty, are always present and must be studied in unison. Therefore dialogue researchers presuppose a both/and orientation to the same relational characteristics, in which both openness and closedness exist simultaneously at all points in time. There are numerous perspectives of dialogue that researchers have while studying the world. However, this both/and nature of dialogue is one commonality that is shared by most and creates the theoretical underpinnings for the dialectical perspectives used in this thesis.

Relational dialectics, the type of dialectics studied in this thesis, stems from a conglomeration of many dialectical theories. Dialectical tensions are at the base of all these theories and can be thought of as the ongoing struggle between two or more opposing forces. A simple example can demonstrate what is meant by a dialectical tension. The struggle of good versus evil is one that is recognized as a tension that all of us feel to varying degrees. While it has been debated whether people are inherently good or evil, it is widely accepted that we have aspects of both good and evil in each of us.

Depending on the situation, one side of this "good-evil" dialectical tension will gain prominence and influence the way a person responds in a situation. Therefore we can say that an action was good or an action was evil. Both of these two sides are constantly pushing and pulling and influencing the way we act. Thinking of the tension in this either/or fashion is a dualistic way of perceiving the competing forces. As mentioned earlier, this way of thinking is useful, but has been deemed overly simplistic since it poses each side of the tension as a binary negation of the other. Recognizing, for example, that an action is not simply good or evil, but simultaneously has a combination of both some good and some evil, represents a more appropriate dialectical view. Thus, good and evil change from an either/or relationship, as in we are either good, or evil, to a both/and orientation, meaning that we possess both good and evil simultaneously. Additionally, it could be recognized that both good and evil are overly simplistic terms, since what is meant by each of them is a combination of different characteristics. Good may really be better represented by honesty, morality, trustworthiness, kindness, and caring, while evil may be more accurately represented by dishonesty, immorality, deception, and meanness. The subsets of good and evil can also be broken down further into more subsets. Honesty may be better characterized as stating what you believe to be true and having the correct information, while morality may be better characterized as honor, integrity, ethical actions, etc. Each of these subsets can also be broken down further, and so on, and so on. It is also key to the communication perspective taken in this thesis to realize that good and evil can only be understood in relation to each other

and that people co-construct their notions of good and evil based upon the context and their shared experiences.

This change in thinking from the either/or, binary, or dualistic mode of dialectical thinking, to that of a "multivocal," or "polyphonic" (literally meaning "many voices") way of thinking represents the foundation of dialectics that will be used in this study. This notion of dialectics, which is based in dialogism, stems from the recognition that contradictory "voices" standing in opposition will all intersect in a person's consciousness and contribute to the way that person makes meaning. This way of thinking relies upon all of these poles existing simultaneously and constantly pushing and pulling against each other for prominence.

Instead of studying good vs. evil, this thesis focuses on relational dialectics, a branch of dialectics pioneered by Baxter and Montgomery while trying to find more holistic ways of studying relationships. In particular, this thesis will focus on the openness-closedness relational dialectic, which, because of the dialogic voices inherent in this tension, is more accurately represented by the tensions of expressiveness, verbal disclosure, directness, and honesty, on one the one hand, and privacy regulation, deception, ambiguity, and discreteness on the other.

Interaction Goals

A branch of the research on goals (Dillard, Segrin & Hardin., 1989) seems to have dialectical qualities although, to date, they have not been described in such a way, nor have goals and dialectics been researched in unison. The purpose of this thesis is therefore to examine how relational dialectics are related to what has been categorized as

primary and secondary goals (Dillard, et al., 1989). Primary goals are ones that drive an interaction, while secondary goals act as a set of boundaries that restrict the behavioral choices available to the social actor(s). A typology of five types of secondary goals was presented by Dillard et al. (1989). These are: identity, interaction, relational resource, arousal management, and personal resource goals.

Identity goals are defined as goals related to the preservation of an individual's morals and ethics. Interaction goals are related to impression management and collaboration toward conversational maintenance, relational resource goals refer to saving positive face for a relational partner (i.e., making others feel valued and included), and arousal management goals refer to controlling displays of emotional states. The only one of the five secondary goals that does not relate to some form of impression management are personal resource goals, which are goals related to increasing or maintaining valued assets (relational, material, or physical).

Any of these may temporarily shift into a position of prominence as the goal that is driving an interaction - thus making it a primary goal. This conception of goals has at its core the belief that multiple goals exist simultaneously, and the goals push a social actor to act in certain ways, while at the same time constraining the options for appropriate action. While the description of goals as primary and secondary has dialogic elements of numerous goals presenting a voice for a course of action, this categorization of goals also allows for data analysis that is easily measurable through the examination of causal relationships. Goals research has focused on looking for "efficient causation" due to the very nature of a construct like goals.

Efficient causation refers to the antecedent-consequent relationship in which it can be seen that situation A causes situation B, or situation A and B cause and are caused by situation C. When studying goals, it is easy to see why this sort of causation is examined. Goals usually have metrics that are easily definable and measurable, which allows for the study of this sort of linear relationship. However, this study will break from the studying of efficient causation to the examination of "formal cause." Formal cause is focused on the interrelationships and patterned changes that show an organization in the way events transpire. Formal cause is more an examination of an interrelated web of changes throughout time and better meets the needs of dialogic study.

This study aims to uncover whether or not an inherent relationship exists between primary-secondary goals and relational dialectics. Goals and dialectics have yet to be studied in unison, although some scholarly writing points to the ways in which combining these fields of study can benefit each respective field (Spitzberg, 1993, p. 140; Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 11). Goals are typically studied monologically or dualistically, which has probably prevented them from being studied alongside dialectics. Scholars do not frequently combine research, constructs, and variables from different paradigms, which is one of the goals of this study. After a more in-depth explanation of relational dialectics and primary and secondary goals, a justification will be provided for combining the two, which will enable a more holistic view of relationships so researchers can get closer to studying relationships in their entirety. Goals research and relational dialectics research have many similarities that point to fruitful avenues for studying the two in unison. In delineating these similarities, the openness-closedness relational dialectic was

chosen due to the high importance of how this dialectic has been shown to affect relational satisfaction. Successful negotiation of when information sharing (Afifi, Dillow & Morse, 2004), openness (Petronio, 2000), privacy regulation (Petronio, 1991), and secrecy (Vangelisti, 1991) are the best courses of action, has been shown to increase relational satisfaction (see Petronio, 2000, for a review). Because these behaviors are so important to satisfying relationships, further examination of this dialectic is warranted.

It is not my intention, nor do I plan to end this conversation by finding the objective answers to how these factors are interrelated. Rather, I hope to open a dialogue and offer empirical accounts to a growing body of scholarship in these fields. It is inevitable that you will understand something differently than I originally meant and the dialogue will begin, because remember, "The meaning of any text resides not in the text itself but in the interaction between an author's words and the particular reader of those words" (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p.24). Hopefully the words in this text bring to light some relevant questions and spark an interest in fruitful avenues of research for the future.

Chapter 2 will describe the theoretical foundations that lead to the hypothesis in this thesis. Dialectics and the specific theory of relational dialectics will be discussed, as will interaction goals and the way that these fields of study can be combined. Chapter 3 will describe the methodology used to assess whether or not changes in goals are related to changes in relational dialectics. The statistical analysis will be reported in Chapter 4, and a discussion of the implications, avenues for future research, and limitations of this study are described in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2:

Theoretical Foundations

Dialogue is typically described as either prescriptive or descriptive. Prescriptive dialogue views dialogue as an ideal communicative achievement, embracing and sharing what Martin Buber (2002) has called the "Interhuman." This school of thought views true dialogue as a rare event that is often sustained for only brief periods of time. Communicative partners open themselves up and live the delicate balance of being profoundly open to others while simultaneously being completely true to themselves. This view takes an existential view of dialogue as a means of truly experiencing and understanding each other's genuine selves. People might be lost in the moment, but concentrating hard to truly grasp the other's perspectives while time flies, and there is a feeling of "connection." This is when people take their social "masks" off and share their true selves.

Descriptive dialogicians, on the other hand, view dialogue as an omnipresent force in our lives and a constant force in relationships, all social interaction, and even an individual's psyche. The label descriptive is chosen since dialogue in this sense is used to describe a phenomenon that can be seen in every facet of life. A dialogue takes place anytime meaning is made. From this perspective, life is an ongoing dialogue in which multiple distinct voices can be heard any time a choice is made or comprehension is found. To come to understand anything, a social being must take meaning from an infinite array of other meanings and dialogue allows us to do so. "Our consciousness at a given moment is constructed in part through the inner dialogues that we have with the

already-spoken from the distant past" (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 27). Dialogue is even a force in an individual's psyche because we assess and categorize everything in terms of language that we learned through actual dialogue with others. Even while making sense of a book the presence of dialogue can be seen. Baxter and Montgomery (1996) described this when stating they were not surprised by the many varied meanings often attributed to Bakhtin's work. We all interpret the meanings of words in different ways and it is the blending of an author's words with our own that help us construct meaning (p.24).

The long-ago distant past plays a role in guiding individuals toward sense-making, as does the immediate past such as a statement made moments ago. Dialogue in this sense refers to the blending of all that we have said and heard and how that is affecting a current situation. Descriptive dialogue is based on the idea that every word that has ever been said to someone, or that a person has said, influences that person in some small way. It is not only the past that helps us make meaning though. The omnipresent dialogue must also include what Bakhtin (1986) refers to as "addressivity," or in other words, to whom a dialogue is addressed. Every utterance has an addressee in mind and we shape our dialogues based on who the conversational participant is. We anticipate responses from others and predict their reactions. We also assess social norms or in other words, a response from a generalized other. People have internal dialogue, predict how others will respond, adapt their messages based upon that prediction, and finally have a literal dialogue with that person. Every step in this dynamic process is dialogic since the very people we are speaking with are helping to create the words out of

our mouths. This shows both the metaphoric and literal ways in which dialogue transpires. This descriptive view of dialogue is a foundational element for this study of "relational dialectics" and "goals."

The purpose of this study is to use this dialogic framework to examine the relationship between relational dialectics and goals. Dialectics is a branch or sub-dialogue within dialogism. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, "dialectic" is derived from the Greek word διαλεχτιχ, which means "the art of discussion or debate" (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 19). This definition came from the assertion that every issue has two opposing sides, and the term dialectic is probably most famous because of Socrates and Plato and their insistence that philosophers should be trained in the "dialectical method." This was a method for truth seeking in which a question was posed so that the respondent could find truth to any dilemma. Questions such as "what is true justice?" could be answered through the exploration of opposing arguments. While Plato may have popularized the term dialectic, his notion of their being an immutable, universal, and objective reality is very different than current conceptions of the term, or even that of Lao Tzu or Heraclitus.

Through his toils to understand human existence, Lao Tzu developed the Taoist philosophy. Tao, or the Way of the Universe, is grounded in the thinking that all aspects of life are formed from the interplay of opposing forces. These are labeled yin and yang and are the dominant opposing forces in life. Lao Tzu explains this thinking while stating, "Being and non-being create each other. Difficult and easy support each other. Long and short define each other. High and low depend on each other. Before and after

follow each other" (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 19). Everything is thought to contain a seed of its opposite and whenever one polarity gains too much strength the seed of its opposite grows. The symbol in figure 2 below shows that as light gains more prominence, the seed of darkness emerges. Of course the opposite is true too. The symbol was also used to show the fluidity as these opposing, contradictory forces battled against each other through ceaseless motion and ongoing change.

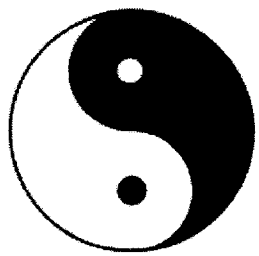

Figure 2. Yin-yang symbol.

Heraclitus was known for the paradoxes and contradictions he expressed. Much like Lao Tzu, he spoke of the contradictory and opposing nature of life. Examples abound, such as how fire destroys and creates life, and how water helps crops grow but floods destroy vegetation. Heraclitus was also well known for speaking of the contradictory nature of returning to the same stream but never being able to step into the same spot twice since new waters flow and the ground bottom has moved. Since the days of ancient Greece and Lao Tsu's original conceptions of Tao, the term dialectic has taken on new meanings for many influential thinkers and recently gained new prominence as Mao, Hegel, and Marx each added their own dialectical theories to the ongoing dialogue. This study will use a dialectical framework suggested by Bakhtin (1973; 1981) and

Baxter and Montgomery (1996; 1998) to better understand relational communication and what has been characterized as primary and secondary goals.

Bakhtinian Dialogism

Mikhail Bakhtin was a Russian literary scholar and philosopher who developed a unique perspective of dialogism. Interested in the heterogeneous nature of human existence, he looked at the ways individuals make meaning of complex reality. Bakhtin believed that all human meaning making is done through language. While he included all social interactions in his worldview, his work primarily focused on the individual. He often had to invent words to describe the phenomena he was interested in as he examined the ways in which words from a novel influenced an individual's consciousness. Bakhtin recognized that individual consciousness and ones notions of self are created through social interaction and that individuals have ongoing dialogue with themselves, as well as with other people. At any given time, an individual metaphorically hears voices from the past, present, and anticipated future, both from within his/her own consciousness, as well as from other people. These are voices that tell an individual how to act and make meaning of a situation.

These "voices" form the backbone to Bakhtin's dialogic perspective, which runs parallel in thought to his beliefs of our realities being constructed and reconstructed through the unfinalizable, open, and heterogeneous nature of social life. Life was a "dialogue" to Bakhtin: a constant give and take between multiple pressures (dialectical tensions) as opposed to a static, determinate, closed, and totalizing monologue (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). These multiple, competing "voices" rub against each other *both*

within each plane of existence *and* between each plane of existence. The three planes in which we find the nexus of intersecting voices are the intrapersonal, the relational, and the social. In the vortex of these planes we find a plurality and polyphonic blend of simultaneously existing voices, or ideas. "An idea begins to live, i.e. to take shape, to develop, to find and renew its verbal expression, and to give birth to new ideas only when it enters into genuine dialogical relationships with other, *foreign*, ideas" (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 71, emphasis in original). This argument for multivocality made by Bakhtin expresses a complex and descriptive analysis of life, in which the more simplistic, monologic and dualistic approaches to understanding our consciousness, relational, and societal interactions are discarded. This dialogic perspective embeds individuals in a situational context that moves the center of understanding from individual perceptions to an ebb and flow of contradictory realities that are constantly constructed and reconstructed from the plurality of consciousnesses. "The sphere of...existence is not the individual consciousness, but the dialogical intercourse *between* consciousnesses...Like the word, the idea wants to be heard, understood and 'answered' by other voices from other positions" (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 72, emphasis in original).

Bakhtin (1981) believed that the "voices" in life's ongoing dialogue are social processes filled with "a contradiction-ridden, tension-filled unity of two embattled tendencies," which he labeled centripetal and centrifugal forces (cited in Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 25). The centripetal-centrifugal tension in Bakhtinian dialogism is the conflicting, basic driving force in dialectical tensions. Centripetal refers to forces of convergence and centrifugal refers to forces of divergence. Centripetal forces push

toward unification, or one understanding and meaning in a situation, while centrifugal forces, on the other hand, pull toward diversification and disunification, ultimately making one meaning for a situation unattainable. Bakhtin believes this dynamic is the core contradiction in life and underlies all meaning-making. He believes there is always a unifying, monologizing force that works to create a unified meaning. The counteracting force is one of difference and divergence. In Bakhtin's view, language is at the core of these opposing forces since language is at the core of all meaning-making. To illustrate this inherent dialectical tension in language, one can look at how it is the very nature of words to create one meaning for the idea the word represents. Pearce and Pearce (2004) discuss the monologizing power of language while stating

> Language does not just name the things of our experience, it creates them. The problem with words is not that they are too vague; it is that they are too precise. When something is named, language seduces us to forget all the other names that might have been used and all the other stories in which it might have been included." (p. 53)

Of course language also possesses the force that counteracts this monologizing power. Bakhtin believed the opposing force also stems from the fact that life is inherently too rich, too varied, too multivocal, and too diverse for monologue to transpire. He terms this richness in life *heteroglossia* (literally meaning many tongues). People attribute different meanings to the same utterances since everyone has different life experiences. Furthermore, "Oral communication is characterized by *presentness*. A word disappears even as it is spoken," which of course means that the passage of time also works to prevent monologism, due to the fact that we recreate our past experiences (Pearce, 1994, p. 129, emphasis in original). Bakhtin believed humans have a basic need to categorize

and stratify aspects of life in order to comprehend them, but that heteroglossia prevents a complete categorization of any human experience. This categorization (centripetal force) and inability to categorize due to the multi-layered richness in life (centrifugal force) ties in closely to language. Language will attempt to categorize, but our realities in life prevent a complete categorization. This constant struggle between unification and disunification is at the core of human existence.

In other words, Bakhtin noticed that life was inherently and constantly filled with contradictions. "Contradiction" has a specific meaning in dialectics that doesn't carry the negative connotation that it does in day-to-day life. It is similar to the way in which "The Taoists saw all changes in nature as manifestations of the dynamic interplay between the polar opposites *yin* and *yang,* and thus came to believe that any pair of opposites constitutes a polar relationship where each of the two poles is dynamically linked to the other" (Capra, 1999, p. 114, emphasis in original). The difference between this definition and one that would be offered by Bakhtin is that Bakhtin would not dichotomize contradictions into polemic opposites. Rather, his view incorporates multiple, simultaneously competing poles. Descriptive dialogic approaches, such as Bakhtin's, use the term dialogue as an omnipresent part of all human meaning-making that needs to be identified and understood. Bakhtin's (1973, 1981) view of dialogue is one in which people attempt to recognize and give credence to the multiple forces that factor in to the consciousness of each participant. He saw dialogue as always present, even within the consciousness of just one individual. Since dialogue is always present, the dialectical tensions inherent in life stem from the multiple perspectives that arise from and are heard

in every situation. This worldview is derived from his thinking that since no one person is the first to utter a sound, any utterance always comes before and after another utterance—people can only contribute and shape the ongoing social dialogue through a consciousness formed from past dialogues with society and one's multiple selves (Stewart & Zediker, 2000). This "...concept of dialogue emerged from a preoccupation with language and literature from the perspective that 'No word can be taken back, but the final word has not yet been spoken and never will be spoken'" (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 52, cited in Pearce & Pearce, 2004, p. 39). Bakhtin sees each utterance as just a link in a chain and that all these links blend in the consciousness of an individual.

This dynamic of human experience creates and is created by the *chronotope*. Chronotope, which literally means "time-space," refers to the temporal and contextual moment in which *Utterances* are located (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 425). Each chronotope both enables and constrains the behavioral choices available to a social actor. For example, if Person A were to meet Person B at a museum, the behavioral choices that could be enacted would be much different than those that would be used if Persons A and B met at a bar. Additionally, the mere fact that they have an initial interaction enables and disables certain behavioral choices. If instead Persons A and B had known each other for years and saw each other in each of these contexts, their behavioral and communicative choices would be different. The chronotope provides a temporal-spatial context for appropriate and inappropriate behavioral choices. It is important to note that social actors will still have numerous choices of behavioral options available at each chronotope. The temporal-spatial context does not limit the realm of appropriate behavioral choices to

only one. Rather, the numerous, equally valid choices of multivocality are still available in the interaction. These spatial-temporal characteristics influence what Bakhtin refers to as the *utterance.*

Much like the term contradiction, utterance also takes on a different meaning than that of everyday life—one that is more complex than is often thought of when using the term utterance in everyday conversation. Every time a conversational participant states something, the history of his/her life experiences, the conversation that has just transpired, and an anticipated response from the partner influences what is said. In addition, the institutionalized thought of a generalized other, or the social appropriateness that stems from cultural norms influences the interaction that transpires. All of these factors are situated within the realm of each enabling-disabling chronotope at a point where psyche and ideology meet to produce the enunciation, pronunciation, intonation, lexical choice, etc. that make up each speech act. This speech act is what is referred to as utterance.

Utterance, in part, refers to the fact that no listener can ever understand all the meanings of what is said and no speaker means all that (s)he says. As Michael Holquist, a translator of Bakhtin's work once said, "[while] My voice gives the illusion of unity to what I say, I am, in fact, constantly expressing a plenitude of meanings, some intended, others of which I am unaware" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. xx). Utterances build off of each other; each utterance that is chosen enables and disables future utterances. When the statement, "I love you" is said by person A to person B, appropriate behavioral choices for both people are enabled, while other behavioral choices are disabled. This depends on the

chronotope in which the utterance is said. If it is the first time "I love you" is said, it may mean something very different than when one person says it trying to save a relationship. Each utterance has both a connotative (centrifugal) meaning, and a denotative (centripetal) one, since each word carries much more meaning than a dictionary could ever provide. In each utterance the forces of unity and divergence can be seen.

These core factors of multivocality, the centripetal-centrifugal forces, heteroglossia, chronotope, and utterance presented by Bakhtin have had a large influence on dialogism and dialectics. Baxter and Montgomery (1996) adapted many of Bakhtin's views to build their own theory of dialectics.

Relational Dialectics

The main difference between the Bakhtinian study of dialectics and Baxter and Montgomery's study of dialectics is the unit of analysis. Bakhtin primarily examined the ways in which the three planes of consciousnesses (intrapersonal, relational, and societal) intersected in the mind of an individual. These can be described as a person's self-consciousness and consciousness of being. Bakhtin looked at how the dialectical tensions collide in personal, relational, and societal spheres and formed one's awareness of self and awareness of existence in the material, concrete world.

Baxter and Montgomery changed the unit of analysis from a focus on the multivocality in an individual consciousness to a focus on the examination of how these same three planes of consciousness intersect in a relationship. The relationship is the unit of analysis in a relational dialectics perspective. Any study of relational dialectics must then foreground the focus on the second plane of consciousness, that of the relationship.

This means researchers must focus their efforts on relational dynamics, relational changes, and how the clashing of personal, relational, and societal tensions manifest themselves through changes in the actual relationship *between* two or more individuals. This branch of study must then necessarily be focused in the interpersonal realm of communication.

Building from Bakhtin's work (1973, 1981), Baxter and Montgomery's (1996, 1998) theory of relational dialectics offers a new paradigmatic way of examining communication within relationships. "While Bakhtin focused on the individual as a social being, we focus on the relationship as a social entity" (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 43). Relational dialectics adds a different voice to the scholarly conversation on the beginning, middle, and end of relationships. The very nature of a relationship is constituted by its dialogic complexity, which is created by the interplay of contradictory voices. They state that relationships are created from and progress as long as contradictions arise from the competing voices and only in the absence of these contradictions does a relationship end. This is clearly a different perspective than the linear progression called for by monologic thinking. Through an explanation of the four central tenets of dialectics their theory is delineated. Many parallels emerge between Bakhtin's dialogism and Baxter and Montgomery's theory of relational dialectics, and to help delineate the differences, four tenets must be described. These are: contradiction, change, praxis, and totality.

Contradiction

Contradictions are the omnipresent centripetal and centrifugal forces of multivocality. Contradictions cannot be solved or resolved; they are inherent in the very nature of relational being. "These oppositional forces simply exist in relationships. Although contradictions are defined as conflicting forces, they do not necessarily indicate a conflict within the relationship" (Pawlowski, 1998, p. 397). They are the unfinalizeable simultaneity of juxtaposing and counterimposing interrelationships at a single point in time. Baxter and Montgomery build from the notion of contradiction that Bakhtin formulated through the centripetal-centrifugal dynamic. This notion of contradiction has the same multivocal background, but instead is applied to relational dynamics.

In the openness-closedness dialectic that is felt in relationships, the binding, centripetal forces would be ones of openness, sharing, disclosure, candor, honesty, etc., while the separating, centrifugal forces would be ones of closedness, privacy, protection of individuality, secrecy, etc. Each of these individual centripetal and centrifugal forces mentioned above are one of the voices of the multivocality in the situation. The voice of candor is competing and clashing with the equally valid voices of sharing, secrecy, privacy, protection of individuality, openness, etc. These forces push and pull on each other in creating the relational dynamics that describe contradiction. Contradictions cannot be solved or resolved simply because they are always changing—they are inherent in the very nature of relational being. Relational dialecticians look for ways to manage the ongoing forces of contradiction as opposed to trying to solve them.

This is a different view than open systems theorists believe. While relational dialectics presupposes that contradictions cannot be resolved, open systems theorists believe that "systems try to maintain a balance with their environments through a process called homeostasis, or self-regulation. After a change in the environment, the system adapts to maintain an equilibrium" (Infante, Rancer, & Womack, 1997, p. 92). While systems theories are more complex and richer than monologism, it should be clear that they differ from the dialectics that Bakhtin and Baxter and Montgomery describe. Much like Bakhtin's notion of *heteroglossia*, Baxter and Montgomery state that there can be no final state of equilibrium because the multivocality produces too many concordant voices. There cannot be a dualistic reality, and there is no equilibrium point because of the constant and ongoing change in dialectical tensions. Every one of the multivocal voices prevent a state of equilibrium since each and every one presents a shock to the system's stability. The intertwined nature of contradictions make living too complex to have either a binary relationship between dialectical poles or a natural equilibrium point that relationships attain.

Baxter and Montgomery (1996) elaborate on this view of contradictions by stating that contradictions refer to "the dynamic interplay between unified oppositions" (p. 8). In describing oppositions, it is necessary to define what this means. The opposite of openness could be defined as "not openness," or as a combination of closedness, privacy, deception, protection of self, etc. This second way of defining oppositions was the one used in this study since it recognizes the multivocality of oppositional forces. Two other

aspects of contradiction from the definition given above need clarification as well: that of the oppositions being "unified" and the "dynamic interplay" between them.

Unified oppositions presuppose a relationship between an individual's closedness and the relationship's openness. In other words, an understanding of closedness is required to understand what is meant by openness. If it were possible for an individual to be completely closed, this would prevent any openness in a relationship. Likewise, if it were possible for an individual to be completely open, this would prevent the possibility of closedness in a relationship. Since it is impossible for an individual to be either completely open or completely closed at all times, there is a unity and interdependence of openness with closedness and vice versa. This unity creates the "both/and"-ness of relational dialectics, meaning *both* openness *and* closedness exist simultaneously.

The concept of multivocality that Bakhtin provided is the basis for the dynamic interaction that grounds these opposing forces of dialectics. In Montgomery and Baxter's (1998) description of the privacy-disclosure dialectic, they describe ways in which people are simultaneously involved in a struggle between *both* privacy *and* disclosure. "The constraints of language force us to talk about one end of this tension at a time, but our experience is that they are lived *together* or simultaneously" (Buber, 2002, p. 589, emphasis in original). They state that this leads to an "in-the-moment interactive multivocality, in which multiple points of view retain their integrity and play off each other" (p. 160). This means that dialectics assumes a dynamic, changing relationship in

the opposing tendencies, or in other words, a dynamic interplay between unified oppositions.

The constant and ongoing change in the prominence of dialectical poles is based upon the fact that every individual will feel needs for both openness and closedness. As mentioned earlier, even if a person were to decide (s)he wanted to be 100% open with his/her partner about a certain situation, it would be impossible to do so. The intertwined nature, or "knots," of oppositional forces continually vie for prominence over the other. For example, if "Alex" was having a discussion with "Joe" about honesty and stated that (s)he would be completely open with him, (s)he would still have secrets and feelings that are hard to share and would still have reasons to deceive him at certain times, even if it is something as simple as how his meatloaf tastes. In other words, Alex would simultaneously have needs of honesty, disclosure, and candor, while also having needs of saving face, dishonesty, withholding certain emotions, and secrecy.

These numerous contradictory poles will constantly change in prominence as situations and temporal aspects of the relationship change. There will constantly be both centripetal and centrifugal forces that set forth ongoing change between the poles of the contradiction. This ongoing, changing relationship among oppositions brings us to the second tenet of relational dialectics, that of change.

Change

The ongoing nature of both personal and social existence produces constant change in life. Change is inevitably a constant in any relationship. Likewise, to make this claim asserts the fact that people also have at least a modicum of stability. The

dialectical unity inherent in "change" means that people would not be able to understand change without a knowingness of stability. "Put simply, dialectical change is the interplay of stability and flux" (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 10). This interplay can be imagined through a situation in which a person approaches a situation that is similar to one (s)he encountered before. As this situation is approached, the same decision may be made as in the past but one's life experiences have inevitably changed, making the meaning of that choice different than the last time. This demonstrates a linear-cyclical nature of change since life progresses linearly through time, but the same choice may return in a cyclical fashion to that of a previous time.

It is this interplay of linear and cyclical change that creates what Werner and Baxter (1994) refer to as "spiraling change." Spiraling change is a combination of linear and cyclical change that causes contradictions to reoccur, but never in an identical form, hence the idea of never being able to step in the same stream twice (cited in Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 13). The idea of spiraling change uses the notion of multivocality in that the dialectical poles from each contradiction continually reemerge, modified by the voices of the past, present, and the predicted future. These tensions, pushing and pulling an individual back and forth, form a spiraling pattern of regularity and uncertainty in the formation of each new chronotope. At the same time, individuals' desires for stability and regularity produce the dialectical force in opposition to change. The understanding of contradiction and change help make sense of the third tenet: praxis.

Praxis

Praxis refers to the communicative choices (in-the-moment improvisations) that create and recreate the relationships to which people belong. Similar to Bakhtin's notion of utterance, each communicative choice builds from previous speech acts and impacts future speech acts. Baxter and Montgomery (1996) stated, "The communicative choices of relationship parties can be viewed as links in a discursive chain; each link adds something new to the chain but is inherently tied to prior and subsequent links" (p. 59). Thus the past, present, and future are all evoked in every interaction. Each communicative choice was created by past relational perceptions and simultaneously creates and destroys the possible future states of a relationship.

> This creative aspect of communication is so powerful that it not only creates, but it also necessarily destroys. In any given moment of communication, the actor must act, but can only make real one of the many potential acts that he or she could potentially have performed. In this way, each momentary action destroys a myriad of potential social worlds. The stories we tell and the patterns of coordinated actions we engage in are, at last, understood simultaneously as scaffolds for comprehending and moving effectively in our world, and as snares that not only blind us to alternatives, but destroy other possible ways to be ourselves, to be in relationships, and to be in community...[praxis] is not so much an attempt to describe unnamable things in the world or to know the potential worlds displaced by the worlds we have created together, but is a persistent reminder that the worlds we know are only some of the many that exist, might have existed, or might yet exist, and that the lives we live are contingent on the interaction of our choices and circumstances. (Pearce & Pearce, 2004, p. 54)

This quotation shows the constitutive and destructive power of communication as each behavioral choice both creates and destroys possible worlds of existence. Praxical determinism, or the enacted choice from the multivocality, is an unfinalizable process of trial, success, and error in dealing with centripetal and centrifugal forces of contradiction and change.

Up to this point these factors have been described in isolation from each other, but in actuality these are all interrelated aspects of social being, which leads to the fourth tenet: totality.

Totality

Totality refers to a holistic approach to understanding relational interdependencies. None of the three tenets mentioned above happen in isolation from the others. Contradiction relies upon change and praxis for its meaning, while change and praxis rely on each other and contradiction. Totality also refers to the fact that all contradictions are inevitably linked to other contradictions. For example, the openness-closedness dialectic is inherently linked to the independence-dependence dialectic. As a relationship experiences changes in openness and closedness, there will necessarily be a change in the dynamic between independence and dependence, as well as innumerable other contradictions. Finally, totality refers to the simultaneous nature of the interaction between the multiple selves of each interactant, the relationship, the temporal-contextual moment, and cultural influences. With all of these factors blending into each utterance, or praxical improvisation, an understanding of totality is achieved. Thich Nhat Hanh (2005) presents a writing that helps to show the deeply intertwined nature of human existence. While the poem titled "Interbeing" was not written to explain the concept of totality as it is described by Baxter and Montgomery, the ideas presented reflect the same existential thought that describes the knot of interconnectedness represented by totality.

Interbeing
Thich Nhat Hanh

If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make paper. The cloud is essential for the paper to exist. If the cloud is not here, the sheet of paper cannot be here either. So we can say that the cloud and the paper *inter-are*. "Interbeing" is a word that is not in the dictionary yet, but if we combine the prefix "inter-" with the verb "to be," we have a new verb, inter-be.

If we look into this sheet of paper even more deeply, we can see the sunshine in it. Without sunshine, the forest cannot grow. In fact, nothing can grow without sunshine. And so, we know that the sunshine is also in this sheet of paper. The paper and the sunshine inter-are. And if we continue to look, we can see the logger who cut the tree and brought it to the mill to be transformed into paper. And we see wheat. We know that the logger cannot exist without his daily bread, and therefore the wheat that became his bread is also in this sheet of paper. The logger's father and mother are in it too. When we look in this way, we see that without all of these things, this sheet of paper cannot exist.

Looking even more deeply, we can see ourselves in this sheet of paper too. This is not difficult to see, because when we look at a sheet of paper, it is part of our perception. Your mind is in here and mine is also. So we can say that everything is in here with this sheet of paper. We cannot point out one thing that is not here—time, space, the earth, the rain, the minerals in the soil, the sunshine, the cloud, the river, the heat. Everything co-exists with this sheet of paper. That is why I think the word inter-be should be in the dictionary. "To be" is to inter-be. We cannot just *be* by ourselves alone. We have to inter-be with every other thing. This sheet of paper is, because everything else is.

Suppose we try to return one of the elements to its source. Suppose we return the sunshine to the sun. Do you think that this sheet of paper will be possible? No, without sunshine nothing can be. And if we return the logger to his mother, then we have no sheet of paper either. The fact is that this sheet of paper is made up only of "non-paper" elements. And if we return these non-paper elements to their sources, then there can be no paper at all. Without non-paper elements, like mind, logger, sunshine and so on, there will be no paper. As thin as this sheet of paper is, it contains everything in the universe in it. (pp. 50-51)

This poem elaborates on the interconnectedness, the totality, of the world we experience. By extrapolating from the ideas found within this prose a scholar can find the same sort of interconnectedness in a relationship. One relationship is built upon past

relationships, other people, hopes for the future, and through the small and often unnoticeable impact that we leave in each others' lives.

With the four central tenets, Baxter and Montgomery (1998, 1996) form the core of relational dialectics. These complicated perspectives blend into a theory that has practical implications for communication research. Baxter and Montgomery (1996) offer a self-admittedly incomplete list of eight praxical improvisations that exist in scholarly research of dialectical relations. These improvisations are the ways in which people have been found to manage the multiple, simultaneously competing forces in their lives.

Denial refers to a relational effort to ignore one pole (independence) while focusing on the other (interdependence). *Disorientation* refers to a relational view of contradictions being inherent in a relationship, but that they cause suffering, so recognition of them should be avoided. These first two are said to be less functional since they neglect the multivocality of contradictions. *Spiraling Inversion* refers to a constant pattern of moving between contradictory poles over time. *Segmentation* refers to forming boundaries for which poles are appropriate in a given context. *Balance* refers to a compromise between dialectical pressures where neither is fully addressed. *Integration* refers to a relational ability to temporarily respond to both poles. *Recalibration* refers to a reframing of dialectical poles so that they are no longer in opposition to each other. *Reaffirmation* refers to a recognition of contradictory poles, but the relationship accepts and celebrates their oppositional nature.

Baxter and Montgomery have studied the methods that people use to manage these dialectical tensions, but they also are aware that this dialogue is new and much

more research is needed to have a better understanding of the way relationships experience and manage these forces. One avenue that has not been explored to date, is that of studying the goals that people have and their interconnections with relational dialectics.

Primary and Secondary Goals

References to goals in this study will refer to interaction goals, or goals that individuals have when planning an interaction, or entering into, taking part in, or leaving an interaction with another individual (a relationship). Goals refer to "future states of affairs that individuals desire to attain or maintain" (Wilson, 2002, p. 134). In helping to attain relational objectives, goals researchers claim that human "Communication is strategic, motivated, and purposive" (Dillard, 1997, p. 47). As Kellermann (1992) argues:

> Communication is goal-directed...We don't communicate (i.e., engage in symbolic exchange) randomly. Symbols are not selected like poker chips by reaching one's hand into a bag and drawing them out in random combinations. Symbols are selected and structured. Symbols are also not cast willy-nilly for whomever might wish to grab one going by. Even when we beam symbols into outer space in a search for extraterrestrial intelligence, these symbols are organized and transmitted for a purpose. (p. 289, cited in Wilson, 2002, p. 135)

Since humans make deliberate choices about their communication, a tradition of goals research has permeated the field of communication (see Wilson, 2002 & Greene, 1997 for reviews). However, by saying that human communication is goal-oriented "I do *not* mean to imply (a) that people are highly conscious of their goals, (b) that people consciously plan how to accomplish goals in advance, or (c) that people's goals are static" (Wilson, 2002, p. 135). People may, or may not expend large amounts of

conscious energy on their goals—conscious awareness of a person's goals is temporally and contextually bound. Furthermore, "To claim that human communication is the result of both conscious and unconscious forces is hardly controversial" (Dillard, 1997, p. 51).

To demonstrate (a) through (c) above, if a colleague of mine annoys me because (s)he constantly leaves materials on the desk that we share, I could be highly aware of the goals I have when going into an influence interaction with him/her. However, a similar situation could unfold differently if the clutter had not bothered me earlier, but did after I came back from teaching and found the desk a mess. I might, in this situation, voice my unhappiness off the cuff, without thinking much about the goal I have in raising the issue (a). If this was the case, I would not have done much planning on how I wanted the situation to unfold (b), and my minimally conscious / unconscious goals would be subject to changing quickly depending on how (s)he reacted (c). "Whereas traditional definitions implicitly assume that the situation is static for the duration of the interaction, a goal-based approach recognizes that what an individual is trying to achieve may vary from moment to moment as opportunities and constraints unfold during social discourse" (Dillard, 1997, p. 65).

One framework for studying goals that people have in interaction is through primary and secondary goals that Dillard et al. (1989) described in their Goals-Planning-Action (GPA) model. "The model distinguished primary goals, which define and drive an interaction, from secondary goals, which shape and constrain message production options" (p. 276). In any interaction, each participant will have a purpose of what (s)he wants to get out of the situated talk, as well as what (s)he wants the relational partner to

take away from the interaction; this primary goal is defined as an influence goal. Primary goals exert a push force that drive the interaction between conversational participants, while secondary goals exert a pull force that constrain the verbal and nonverbal choices that relational partners exchange while conversing. "Rather than driving the interaction, as does the primary goal, secondary goals shape the range of behavioral options available to the speaker" (Dillard & Marshall, 2003, p. 483). Both primary and secondary goals will always be present in an interaction.

Dillard (1990) identified a typology of five secondary goal types in the GPA sequence: Identity, interaction, relational resource, personal resource, and arousal management, any of which may temporarily be the driving force in an interaction and gain prominence because of situational and relational exigencies, thus temporarily becoming a primary goal.

Identity goals are defined as goals related to the preservation of an individual's notion of self. These goals relate to the ways in which a person sees her/himself fitting into the world. These can be related to morals, ethics, attitudes, and behavior. Interaction goals revolve around the need for conversational maintenance and fluid interactions. They are also tied to the need to manage the impression that others will form based upon one's actions and behavior. Relational resource goals refer to the need to make others feel valued and included. Someone who is expressing sympathy or empathy is enacting a relational resource goal. These goals are also enacted when saving face for a relational partner, or in other words, helping to prevent another person from feeling embarrassed. Arousal management goals refer to controlling displays of

emotional states, the most common of which is anxiety. However, arousal management also refers to the goal of controlling one's temper, uncontrollable laughter, etc. The last of the five is the personal resource goal, which is related to gaining or maintaining something of value: relational, material, or physical. This could be the goal of gaining a physical relationship with someone or getting a ride home.

This model assumes that individuals pursue multiple goals simultaneously (Dillard, 1997; Dillard & Marshall, 2003; Lannutti & Monahan, 2004; MacGeorge, 2001; Schrader & Dillard, 1998; Shepherd, 1998; Wilson, 2002; Wilson, 1997). This pursuit of multiple goals in an interaction has complicated the goals research since there are multiple focal points in a given study. In the past, "One complication [in goals research] arises from the fact that social actors often possess and attempt to achieve multiple goals more or less simultaneously" (Dillard, 1997, p. 55). For example, in any relational interaction, a person may simultaneously try to gain a material asset, maintain ethical standards in doing so, try to save face for the relational partner, maintain a fluid interaction, and attempt to hide certain emotions. In this scenario, all five of these goal types are simultaneously affecting the behavioral choice, and any one may temporarily be the driving force.

In the example used above, "Nancy" may have as her primary goal the desire to have her officemate stop leaving debris on the desk. The primary, or influence goal in this situation would be a personal resource goal since she would be trying to maintain a valued asset (a clean desk). She would also have, in this situation, many secondary goals that would constrain and shape the way in which she approached the situation. Nancy

would have identity goals of upholding her moral beliefs (i.e., everyone should have equal treatment, so it is unfair to have to come back to a messy desk because of an office mate); she would have interaction goals that related to getting a positive judgment on the way she handled the situation (i.e., not coming across as rude); she would have relational resource goals that compelled her to save face for her officemate (i.e., trying to show that she thinks the other person is still a good office mate and that she likes sharing an office with him/her despite this mess on the desk); and Nancy would have arousal management goals of trying to control her anger with the situation so that she would not feel bad about the interaction later.

The characteristics of multiple goals that shift over time, and the relationship between primary and secondary goals help to provide a rationale for a relationship between goals and relational dialectics.

The Interaction of Goals and Relational Dialectics

Now that the dialectical theories framing this research have been discussed and primary and secondary goals have been delineated, parallels between the two branches of research emerge. These can be understood by the notions of centripetal and centrifugal forces, multivocality, chronotope, and utterance.

Primary goals have a unifying, monologizing purpose of making people attribute the same meaning to an interaction so that the primary goal can be accomplished (centripetal force). Secondary goals, on the other hand show the heteroglossia inherent in lived experience (centrifugal force). They constrain, shape, and inject opposing "voices" into every interaction. Sabee and Wilson (2005) illustrate this relationship in goals when

stating, "The primary goal...exerts a 'push' force, and thus motivates the actor to speak. Secondary goals, in contrast, exert a 'pull' force, by shaping and constraining what the actor says and does" (p. 186). While it may seem that any type of goal would be a monologizing force that leads someone to achieve one objective, secondary goals actually operate in a centrifugal fashion. They do so by injecting numerous possible ways of attaining the primary goal. If, for example, I had the goal of developing trust in a relationship (primary, relational resource goal), I could achieve this through having caring conversations that demonstrate my trustworthiness (secondary, interaction goal), by discussing my ethics and beliefs about how relational partners should treat each other (secondary, identity goal), or by hiding my own jealousy and insecurities in hopes that my partner would mimic my behavior (secondary, arousal management goal). Therefore, secondary goals bring numerous ways of achieving a primary goal and are a centrifugal force that opens the doors of possibility. This centripetal-centrifugal dynamic in goals highlights the same dynamic that Bakhtin and Baxter and Montgomery describe in dialectics, and this similarity forms one reason for studying the interrelations of these two fields. It seems that as a relationship experiences changes in the centripetal and centrifugal forces, individuals' goals would change so as to align with or resist the changing dynamics.

Current goals research describes the multiple, simultaneously competing goals and recognizes that the prominence of each goal shifts over the course of an interaction. Just as with dialectical research, the shifting that takes place is based upon lived experiences, situational exigencies, and predicted future outcomes. Not only is it

common sense that goals shift over time and change throughout contexts, but many researchers have also described this phenomenon (Dillard & Marshall, 2003; Dillard, 1997; Dillard, 1990; Dillard et al., 1989; Schrader & Dillard, 1998; Wilson, 2002; Wilson, 1997), however, not in conjunction with a dialectical perspective. The recognition and focus on the temporal-contextual dynamics that factor into each utterance highlight another possible link between these two branches of research. A relational dialectics researcher would state that as chronotopes change the relational dialectics inherent in the situation would change, and goals researchers have also noted the temporal aspects of changing goals. The centripetal-centrifugal forces, multivocality, and chronotope intersect and blend in each utterance. Each utterance is affected by these factors and simultaneously affects future states of these factors.

A key to examining these two branches in unison is dispelling any thoughts that studying goals places the research solely in the cognitive realm. It is true that an individual's goals and the meaning from any interaction must ultimately reside in the cognition of each interactant (Dillard & Schrader, 1998, p. 303). However, this is not at odds with the recognition that goals are born from social interaction and a co-construction of the meanings in a situation. Shepherd (1998) argued the merits of thinking of goals as psychological creations by stating,

> The trouble with turning a social construction, like "goal," into a bit of psychological concrete, is we are apt to forget the turning; and soon enough, as Dewey (1925, p. 143) long ago noted, we 'fail to recognize that this world of inner experience is dependent upon an extension of language which is a social product and operation.' (p. 296)

Instead, combining these fields of study recognizes *both* the psychological *and* sociological forces that are brought to bear in goal construction. In fact, this perspective does so through focusing attention on past lived experiences, immediate prior utterances, the anticipated response of the other, and the cultural norms for the interaction. In actuality this study is an attempt to gain a more holistic view of lived experiences by recognizing that there are psychological, relational, and sociological factors that contribute to individual interpretations of relationships.

Interaction, relational resource, personal resource, arousal management, and identity goals do not make any sense unless situating them within a relational and sociological context. All of these goals intersect in the individual's plane of consciousness (cognitive realm) and get enacted through behavioral choices in conversation (utterance/praxis). Utterances, or praxical improvisations can never be viewed in regard to only one person. An utterance is always directed at another person or group of people and is therefore influenced by the social actors. To examine goals without acknowledging how they are influenced by and influencing the meaning that gets created from a situation isolates them into a static position. By taking a socially constructed, more holistic view, researchers can see commonalities between these two branches of research and try to bridge gaps of understanding. Since numerous similarities exist in the empirical descriptions of these areas of interest, a rationale emerges for an intertwined nature of goals and relational dialectics.

In describing goals research, Wilson (2002) notes "What is lacking to this point, however, is an integrative framework that explains how, and in some senses why, a host

of individual, cultural, and situational factors can affect people's goals" (p. 167). This clearly is a call for research that looks at goals from a multivocal perspective. And since goals researchers have noted the multivocality in goals, although not in those terms, it becomes clear that the strengths of dialectical research can be used in assessing how multiple, simultaneously existing goals vie for prominence and clash throughout *time* and *space*. To illustrate this point, one finding in primary/secondary goals is the fact that the primary goal is not always rated as the goal with the highest importance (Schrader & Dillard, 1998). From a monologic view, it seems confusing that the goal driving the interaction would not be the most important one to the relational interactant. However, from a relational dialectics perspective, which is a view that adds a temporal aspect to this multivocal, goal driven behavior, it makes sense that while we may need to get something accomplished in the short-term, long-term relational goals may outweigh the driving force in terms of importance. In other words, there are multiple goals interacting throughout all temporal-spatial existences.

One assumption appears to be self-evident, or axiomatic, which is the fact that when tensions in a relationship change, participants will have new goals for the relationship, and will, in turn, likely enact varying strategies of behaviors. One possibility is that there is a cyclical model in which relationships oscillate between varying sides of the dialectical tensions, while individuals enact varying goals to keep consistent or produce change in the tensions. This idea builds from VanLear's (1991) study in which he hypothesized "that the micro structure of conversational development is mirrored in the larger structure of relationship development...The nesting of smaller

cyclical processes within a larger cyclical progression forms a larger complex pattern" (p. 342). He did indeed find this to be true and stated that "These data suggest that these shorter, more frequent cycles are superimposed upon longer cycles. Likewise, these cycles *do not appear to be meaningless behavioral fluctuations* but are registered perceptually as periodic variations in the openness of self and others" (emphasis mine, VanLear, 1991, p. 356). The goal here is to extend Rawlins's (1983) notion that "such structures [dialectics] can be interpretive tools for understanding what people say and do" (p. 4) to include the understanding of why people say and do.

The similarities in dialectics and goals research provide a rationale for studying the two in unison. This rationalization for why researchers would benefit from examining goals from the dialogic, multivocal, relational dialectics framework needs a starting point. If one accepts the premises behind social constructionism, then one also has to accept that individuals constantly recreate their relational realities. This means that the openness-closedness dialectic is continuously being recreated and redefined through behavioral choices. Since interaction goals are always directed at interaction with another human being, the only purpose of these goals could be to affect the status quo in the relationship, either by maintaining or changing it. Any utterance will come from an attempt toward one of these relational objectives, which requires behavioral choices that fall somewhere on the spectrum of openness-closedness behavior. As meaning is co-constructed and attributed to these behaviors, the openness-closedness relational dialectic will be redefined and the relationship will change. In turn, if one accepts the premise that an individual will have goals related to the current state of a relationship, researchers can

expect to see a restructuring of individuals' goals as the current state of the relationship changes. Therefore:

> H1: Changes in the openness-closedness relational dialectic will be related to changes in goal structuring.

One would expect to see that changes in the relationship would also affect individuals' goals and that the enactment or suppression of goals would in turn affect future states of the relationship. If this relationship exists, researchers can learn more about the intricacies of each through a unified study.

Chapter 3:

Methodology

The objective of this study was to determine whether changes in participants' goal structuring was related to changes in the openness-closedness relational dialectic. To examine the relationship, a trained confederate deliberately manipulated the openness-closedness relational dialectic. Stimulated recall was then used as a manipulation check of this dialectical shift and to examine any changes in the goal structuring. This confederate engaged in a tape-recorded conversation with the participants. To simulate a natural interaction, participants were told that the purpose of the study was to assess the content of introductory, everyday "small talk." The confederates were trained to carry on the conversation with the participant for 2-3 minutes, before encouraging an explicit change in the relational dialectics between them. They would then carry on with the conversation until the 5-minute mark when I would re-enter the room.

The methodology needed for this study had to encompass a setting that was as natural as possible so that participants could be observed and analyzed in a realistic setting. The chosen methodology encompasses an interaction between two participants that was designed to be natural, as well as allow for an examination of qualitative and quantitative data. I wanted to be able to measure and quantify changes in participants' goals through an oral survey after a stimulated recall procedure. This procedure was designed to help the participants recollect underlying thought processes and goals that were related to the explicit shift in the openness-closedness relational dialectic. I wanted to find general trends about goal structuring while relational dialectics changed, but also

wanted to have an interpretive investigation in to participants' individual experiences. Blending a survey instrument with quantitative data and an interview that allowed richer descriptions of individual experiences allowed for this multi-methodological approach.

Participants

This study interpreted the conversational and dialectical experiences of thirty-one students at San Jose State University from Public Speaking classes (Comm. 20). SJSU has a diverse student body population, which brought a variety of perspectives into the study. Some examples of the diversity at SJSU are that approximately 22% of students are greater than thirty years old, 31.7% of the student body is Asian, and nearly 1/3 of the students speak a language other than English (http://www.sjsu.edu). All participants were gathered through a convenience sample, but I hoped that recruiting from SJSU would add a richer set of participant ideas and experiences to the study. No demographic information was gathered on individual participants because the purpose of this study was not to generalize about a certain demographic. Instead, this study aimed to find general trends in the way people experience relational changes and changes in goals. Participants were recruited from public speaking classes and were all volunteers. Six different teachers gave permission for me to recruit students in their classes. Five of these six teachers gave extra credit that ranged from five extra credit points out of a 1000 point class, to twenty extra credit points out of a 1000 point class. One instructor awarded no extra credit for students who participated. Participants were 18 years or older so that no parental consent was needed.

Procedure

After obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to work with human subjects, I started recruiting from my colleagues' classrooms for interested students. Due to the fact that a confederate was helping to manipulate the conversations toward an explicit shift in the openness-closedness relational dialectic, it was important students not understand what I was actually studying. To set the stage for the research I informed students that the purpose of this research was to find out the ways that people built bonds in everyday conversation. The study could then be used to examine these characteristics and further the existing research on public speaking. I told them that students in my Communication 20 class learned that effective public speaking has many parallels to interpersonal communication. I gave examples such as such as being conversational, speaking naturally, and gesturing naturally, and said that each of these techniques can help in giving an effective presentation. Since public speaking can be related to the everyday characteristics of relating on an interpersonal level, this study would help further public speaking research. I also told students that this was an opportunity to participate in a study that might one day appear in a communication journal, and in most cases, it would also be an extra credit opportunity. A signup sheet was passed around that collected students' names, email addresses (or phone numbers), their instructor's name, and dates of availability. Forty-three students signed up to participate in the study; however, only data from thirty-one of the participants were used in analysis. Eleven students did not show up for their scheduled times and data were not collected from one

student (for reasons described below), which resulted in a relatively low attrition rate of 31%, or 31 out of 45 students who participated.

I then contacted students by either email or phone and assigned a time to meet at the Communication Lab. They were told the importance of being there on time since if they did not show, their "partner" would not be able to participate either. This correspondence was designed to instill a sense of accountability to me as well as the other student. Finally, the day before their scheduled times, I sent a reminder email and included my contact information in case they could no longer make their time. I informed the Communication Lab tutors what was going on and asked them not to comment about how the same confederate kept showing up for numerous sessions. They were also asked to ensure the participants in the study did not interact with each other before the study started.

While recruiting and scheduling was taking place, two different confederates were in the process of being trained for the research. These two confederates participated throughout the data collection phase. Both were trained to engage the participant in a two to three minute conversation before encouraging an explicit change in the relational dialectics between them. They would then carry on with the conversation until the five-minute mark when I would re-enter the room. We role-played different types of people they might come across – some were cheerful and participatory, while others were, in the words of one confederate, "just kinda there." I made the confederates aware that the most important factors in making this a successful interaction were to start the interaction so that they were clearly acting either very open or very closed. They practiced

beginning the conversation with actions that would be regarded as highly open and disclosive behavior, which would welcome the participants to engage in the conversation. They also practiced opening the conversation with reserved, guarded, and non-engaging behaviors. This was to carry on for the first 2-3 minutes by either beginning with a friendly stance, asking questions, disclosing past experiences, and the display of welcoming gestures toward the other participant, or by enacting privacy regulation behaviors through boundary management (Petronio, 1991), lack of self-disclosure, and general disinterest in the conversation. The purpose was to start with an open and welcoming exchange or a closed and distant attitude. From there, the conversation was predicted to have been easier to manipulate at later points in the conversation. Instead of always starting with a closed posture and shifting toward more openness (or vice versa), I wanted the confederates to have the flexibility to use whatever strategy of shifting the dialectical tension they thought worked best with each participant. Because the purpose was to test whether participants' goals shifted as relational dialectics shifted, I also wanted to ensure that the relational dialectics shifted in both directions.

The confederates were then supposed to create a dialectical shift through the disclosure of a "secret." I anticipated a dialectical shift regardless of the way the participant interpreted the disclosure of the secret. The participants in the study could either see this disclosure as the confederate opening up and sharing highly personal information, thus moving the conversation toward more openness, honesty, sharing, and disclosure, or interpret this as an inappropriate remark as they had just become acquainted. This was expected to then push the relational dialectic toward one of

closedness, secrecy, dishonesty, or lack of participation altogether. Depending on the way the conversations transpired, the confederate was to disclose this "secret" between 2½ -3 minutes into the conversation. Petronio (2000) describes the joint "owning" of information that is disclosed in a relationship, and the sharing of novel information as one-way that privacy boundaries are made more permeable, thus altering the openness-closedness-privacy-secrecy-disclosure relational dialectic. Therefore, the relational dialectic would change due to an explicit change in information sharing and privacy regulation. The conversational change was thought to alter a relational dialectic because self-disclosure cannot be viewed as an individual activity. Disclosure always involves more than one person and is therefore a relational activity. Disclosure, as with any form of communication, is a collective activity that multiple people participate in (Holtgraves, 1990, p. 196, cited in Derlega et al., 1993, p. 4).

Two different secrets were told in the interactions, followed by a question that made the participant respond to the previous utterance. The first, "I've still got a copy of the midterm I stole from that class. You want me to pass it on to you?," would, under most circumstances, violate appropriate disclosure for a first interaction. The second, "I just moved here this semester and love it. The first night I was here I had the best sex ever and am still seeing him/her. What about you; are you having sex with anyone right now?" This would, under most circumstances, also violate appropriate disclosure for a first interaction among strangers. I predicted that this would radically alter the openness-closedness dialectic.

The confederates were then supposed to adjust their communicative patterns toward the opposite side of the spectrum from where they started. The conversations were to continue on for another one and a half to two minutes until I would re-enter the room and say that I hoped they enjoyed meeting each other, but that is all the time I have to study their interaction. I reminded each of them that I would interview them immediately, however, I only interviewed the participants (not the confederate). The interviews were done using the stimulated recall technique, which is done by replaying a video or tape-recorded interaction, while asking questions that delve into what the participants were thinking (Ethell & McMeniman, 2000; Harter & Kirby, 2004; Legge, 1992; Pomerantz & Ende, 1997). To make the situation as realistic and non-obtrusive as possible, the interactions were not videotaped, but were audiotaped.

Stimulated recall has been used as a means of helping participants recall their cognitive and metacognitive processes, or in other words, to help make "'tacit' thinking explicit and elicit cognitions underlying their observable actions" (Meijer, Zanting & Verloop, 2002, p. 414). A semi-structured interview took place during the recall procedure (See Appendix A for the Interview Protocol). Participants were encouraged to stop the tape at any time in order to elaborate on past conversations and experiences they have had, and to explain the thinking processes, personal theories, and beliefs that informed or guided their interaction. Originally, a minimum of three series of questions were to be asked before the "turning point" in the conversation (2½ - 3 minute mark – disclosure of the secret). However after the first day of interviews I adapted the procedure due to the clear "response pattern" that developed while participants were

answering the same questions over and over. Participants on the first day of collecting data started answering the series of questions by stating "the same answer as last time," or "I don't think anything has changed since the last round of questions." To avoid the responses that were clearly a set of patterned responses I decided to change the number of times a participant was questioned before and after the turning point to two series of questions. The second response was dropped for each of the six participants.

If the participants stopped the tape and started explaining what was happening at different points, the interview protocol would be injected with discussion at those points. If, however, the participants did not stop the tape on their own, it would be stopped at the one-minute, and two-minute marks. This is a blend of two methods of stimulated recall, the Interpersonal Process Recall (Kagan, Krathwohl & Miller, 1963) and the Video Reconnaissance Method (Trierweiler, Nagata & Banks, 2000). The blending of a structured recall procedure (IPR) and an unstructured (VRM) allowed for a more naturalistic, but at the same time rigorous examination of their goal structuring and how and why it changed (if it did at all). Stimulated recall interviews have been shown to help make participants able to verbalize their otherwise unexplainable cognitive processes (Dickson, McLennan & Omodei, 2000), and have "shown particular promise...accessing cognitions underlying decision making in dynamic, real-world settings" (Dickson, McLennan & Omodei, 2000, p. 219). The participant responses during the recall were recorded so any changes in interaction goals and relational dialectics could be examined. Appendix B shows a sample coding sheet that was used with every interview. Each question was designed so that every response would correspond with one of the goal

types being studied or assess a change in the openness-closedness-privacy-disclosure dialectic.

It was vital to use a method that inquired about the multivocality present in a relationship when assessing the discursive nature of goals. "The specific method of gathering and analyzing data is not the critical issue. Whatever method is chosen, however, must capture the intrinsic dialectical quality of the multivocality" (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 227). A stimulated recall done in this fashion did so and was chosen primarily for this reason. As Trierweiler, Nagata, and Banks (2000) noted the VRM "operationalizes the multiple experiences, descriptions, and explanations of events..." (p. 124). Based on the interview protocol, this procedure allowed for an assessment of changing goals and relational dialectics throughout time. This method of collecting and analyzing data allowed quantitative and qualitative data analysis to be used. Much of the dialectics research to date has been conducted only from the interpretive or critical paradigms, but it is important to remember that

> Qualitative, interpretive, and hermeneutic methods...are not designed to supplant more traditional forms of social science research, but to supplement them in the task of 'getting at' processes of meaning-making and sense-making that seemed inaccessible otherwise. (Anderson, Baxter & Cissna, 2004, p. 10)

This methodology was chosen exactly for these reasons – to have a data set that allowed for statistical analysis, but also to have qualitative data that allowed me to delve deeper into participant responses.

As much planning as went into this study, variance in the procedure arose and situations had to be altered. Participants were scheduled to meet in the Communication Lab five minutes before their time slot and a gap was scheduled so that the previous

encounter would have ended five minutes before the meeting time for the next participant arrived. This was to ensure that no participants would see interactants from the previous discussion leaving the encounter. While this planning was designed to prevent overlap in schedules, timing problems arose. Two participants decided to work on "modules" prior to their participation in the study. One participant arrived an hour early and saw three participants arrive and leave with the same confederate. This student was briefed on the situation, given extra credit, and was asked to not participate. The second student arrived to see one participant leave the Communication Lab with the confederate and myself. The confederate and myself acted as though the participant's partner did not show up and I asked the confederate if they would mind participating a second time for double extra credit. The participant in this situation did partake in the study and data was used in analysis. Eleven students did not show up for their scheduled time slots. This resulted in data from 31 students being collected and analyzed.

Time also became a factor for three of the students during the stimulated recall question and answer period. I scheduled two minutes for a quick briefing of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies and the purpose of the study, five minutes for the participants' interaction, fifteen minutes of stimulated recall, a three minute debriefing period, and a five minute gap before the next participants were scheduled to arrive (for a total of thirty minutes per participant). This fifteen-minute stimulated recall period had to be rushed at times because three participants wanted to discuss the interaction for longer than the permitted time period. When this situation arose, I tried to

politely remind them that a new set of participants was arriving, and we had to continue with the next phase of questions and answers.

Each of the conversations was digitally recorded and transferred to a computer to be listened to later in case of questions. A second digital recorder was used to tape the stimulated recall sessions in case the recall conversations needed to be played back for verification of correct recording of answers. These were also transferred to a computer for later listening. All interactions between the confederate and participant were coded while being replayed (described in the results section), and interactions between myself and the participant were transcribed so that further analysis could be conducted on participants' answers.

Chapter 4:

Results

Thirty-one participants engaged in this study. All participants were recruited from intro-level Communication 20 (Public Speaking) classes at San Jose State University. Because the study was not attempting to make generalizations about a particular group of people, stratified by age, gender, religious beliefs, or sexual preference, etc., no demographic information was gathered. Instead, the study aimed to find general trends in the goals individuals have as the openness-closedness dialectical tension shifts in a relationship. Of more interest than similarities and differences in the data reported by individuals based upon their demographics was the data reported by participants as a whole with regards to each variable.

Participants rated each of the five secondary goal types on a scale of one to six at four points throughout the stimulated recall session. Mean scores were calculated for the two points prior to the turning point and then again for the scores after the turning point. The scores for each of the goals were: identity goals prior to the turning point ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 1.38$), identity goals after the turning point ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 1.29$), interaction goals prior to the turning point ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.47$), interaction goals after the turning point ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.64$), personal resource goals prior to the turning point ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.29$), personal resource goals after the turning point ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 1.30$), relational resource goals prior to the turning point ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.43$), relational resource goals after the turning point ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 1.49$), arousal management goals prior to the

turning point ($M = 2.02$, $SD = 1.21$), and arousal management goals after the turning point ($M = 1.61$, $SD = .79$).

Of the participants ($N = 31$) engaged in this study, 61.29% reported that the relationship had changed after the turning point in their conversation when asked "Do you feel that the relationship is progressing toward more openness, is staying the same, or is becoming more closed?" I used this question as a manipulation check to ensure the validity of the results and ensure participants actually felt the shift in the openness-closedness dialectical tension. A two-tailed t-test was run to determine whether or not participants really did experience this shift, and significant results were obtained, $t(30) = -3.474$, $p < .05$ ($M = 1.58$, $SD = .672$). A two-tailed test was run because it assumes as its null hypothesis that participants would experience no change in the relationship. The test then examines not only if there was a change in the relationship, but also examines how the relationship changed – either toward more openness or more closedness. The significant results obtained did indeed show that participants felt the relationship had progressed toward more openness since the reported mean score was 1.58. The interval data was setup so that 1 = more open, 2 = the same, and 3 = more closed.

For the second manipulation check, I asked the question "Do you feel the relationship is changing?" during each interview. A chi-square test was run to see if there were substantially more "yeses" than "nos." Participants reported "yes" 21 times and "no" 10 times. Chi-square analysis revealed that there were significantly more "yeses" than "nos," $\chi^2(1) = 3.903$, $p < .05$. This manipulation check also confirmed that the

participants did indeed experience the shift in the openness-closedness relational dialectic that was built into the interaction.

The hypothesis in this study was that changes in the openness-closedness relational dialectic would be related to changes in goal structuring. Partial support was found for the hypothesis because changes in arousal management goals were found, but changes were not found with any of the other goals. This hypothesis was divided into 2 tests: change in participants' primary goals and change in participants' secondary goals. Testing participants' primary goals would demonstrate any change in participants' driving force for the purpose of their actions as the relational dialectic changed. The second set of tests focused on changes in secondary goals, or conversational constraints, that participants reported. All statistical analysis revolved around the changes in goals since the study had a built-in shift in the openness-closedness dialectical tension.

Primary Goals Analysis

During the stimulated recall sessions, I played back the previously recorded interactions and asked participants at each of the four recall intervals, "what was the primary thing you were trying to accomplish at this time?" Both myself and one other trained, independent coder coded each of the open-ended responses. The second coder was also a participant in some of the conversations. I thought using a coder who understood the purpose of the study as well as the varying goal types would increase familiarity with the data. I also thought that having been involved in the data collection and having a better understanding of the way these interactions were transpiring would increase the likelihood that the coder could more accurately categorize the participants'

primary goals. The coder was 23 years old and was not a student at San Jose State University. Due to these characteristics, he should have been able to put himself in the shoes of a student who was close in age, while at the same time being removed from knowing any of the participants beforehand.

The five categories used in coding came from the five classifications of goals that Dillard, et. al (1989) described: identity, interaction, personal resource, relational resource, and arousal management. After we discussed the various goal types, the coder read the literature review portion of this thesis. The coder also read Dillard, Segrin, and Harden's (1989) article, "Primary and secondary goals in the production of interpersonal influence messages" to gain a greater understanding of the goal constructs. Finally, the coder went through fifteen fictitious examples (three in each category) I created to allow time for discussion as to why each would be categorized the way that it was. The general guidelines for coding were: answers that were based upon one's sense of values or how the respondent viewed him/herself were coded as identity goals. Answers that were related to improving the conversation were coded as interaction goals. Answers that were related to gaining something of value were coded as personal resource goals. Trying to make the other person feel valued or having an awareness for the other's feelings were coded as relational resource goals. And lastly, answers that were focused on the participant hiding emotions or feelings were coded as arousal management goals (see Appendix C for the coding manual). The two goal types that we had greatest level of disagreement over were interaction goals and relational resource goals. In examining the differences between the two, we agreed that answers that pertained specifically to

conversation would be coded as interaction goals, while any other answers related to increasing closeness in the relationship would be coded as relational resource goals.

To verify inter-coder reliability, Cohen's Kappa was calculated and a high level of agreement was found at each of the four recall points: T1 = .90, T2 = .89, T3 = .72, and T4 = .75.

Table 1 shows my coding of the primary goals, while Table 2 shows the frequencies of primary goals as reported by the second coder.

Table 1.

My coding of participants' primary goals.

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4
Identity	1	0	1	0
Interaction	12	17	13	9
Personal resource	7	5	7	11
Relational resource	10	8	9	10
Arousal management	1	0	0	0

Table 2.

Confederate's coding of participants' primary goals.

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4
Identity	1	0	1	0
Interaction	11	16	9	8
Personal resource	6	4	6	12
Relational resource	12	10	13	10

Arousal management	1	0	1	0

One participant said he was not trying to accomplish anything at T2, T3, and T4, but other than that each answer was coded into one of the five goal types. Examples of each are:

> Identity: "I don't know. Uh, I wanted him to think I'm cool, and at the same time wanted him to know who I am, what I'm doing here, and uh, that school's important to me."
> Interaction: "Really just to get the conversation going."
> Personal resource: "He seemed cool and like a fun guy to go boarding with, so I guess I was trying to find a boarding buddy."
> Relational resource: "To try and get him to loosen up. Ya know, he was so nervous I just felt bad."
> Arousal management: "I was kinda nervous. After signing that form, and the tape recorder and all, I just didn't want to sound stupid."

All statistical analysis of primary goals was based upon my coding of the data.

Secondary Goal Analysis

As mentioned above, participants had the conversations played back to them and at four points were asked a series of questions. At each of these four recall points participants were asked to rate the five secondary goal types on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1-6. Two of these recall points were prior to the turning point and the other two were after the turning point. A mean score was found for each secondary goal prior to the turning point and after the turning point. A series of paired sample t-tests were run to determine significant changes in the participants' secondary goals.

Hypothesis Testing

This study aimed to find out whether or not changes in the openness-closedness relational dialectic are related to changes in goal structuring. As described earlier, two sets of tests were run to test the hypothesis. The tests found partial support. In order to

test the hypothesis and see if the participants' primary goals changed, chi-square tests were performed. While there were no significant differences in participants' primary goals, $\chi^2(1) = 3.903$, p = ns from before the turning point to after it, participants did have changes within their secondary goal structuring. Paired sample t-tests were run to determine the changes in secondary goals before and after the dialectical shift. These t-tests were run to determine whether or not there were changes in the participants' goals after the turning point in the conversation since a direct comparison of goal ratings could be run through this analysis. It could then be reasoned that the differences in ratings could be attributed to the changing openness-closedness dialectical tension. Arousal management scores declined significantly $t(30) = 2.45$, $p < .05$ from before the turning point ($M = 2.02$, $SD = 1.21$) to after ($M = 1.61$, $SD = .79$). Participants reported no other significant differences in the changing of their goals. Identity goals did not change significantly after the turning point $t(30) = -.812$, p = ns, nor did interaction goals $t(30) = -.243$, p = ns, personal resource goals $t(30) = 1.29$, p = ns, or relational resource goals $t(30) = .52$, p = ns. These data show that participants' goal structuring did indeed change after the turning point, however the changes were not in all goal types.

Chapter 5:

Discussion

The results obtained from this study offer insights into both goals and relational dialectics. Analysis demonstrated the intertwined nature of relational dialectics and certain aspects of goal structuring.

Participants reported that they did indeed experience a shift in the openness-closedness relational dialectic and also experienced a change in their arousal management goals. This means that as the openness-closedness dialectic shifted, participants did not feel the need to hide or suppress feelings or emotions as much as they did prior to the change in the dialectic. Thus, telling a secret may shift a relationship toward more openness and reduce the arousal management goals a conversational participant has, even if the secret is one that might be situationally inappropriate. This is important because it means people reduce their desire to hide or suppress emotions and could lead them toward feeling more comfortable in the interaction.

These results are both intuitive and counterintuitive. Everyday experience would lead us to agree with the idea that a relationship becomes more open as a secret is shared. We also know that people have a desire to reciprocate when one person shares a secret (Cialdini, 2001), and that these disclosures can enhance the closeness felt by both parties. At the same time, Vangelisti, Caughlin, and Timmerman (2001) have shown that a secret that is shared at inappropriate times, or in an inappropriate manner, could have the opposite effect. Research on Expectancy Violation Theory has shown this. EVT posits that people often act in ways that violate what others predict. When an action violates

what another party thought would happen, the party will respond in one of two ways. If the expectation was violated in a positive way, the receiver will act in accordance with what the source wanted. If the source negatively violates an expectation, the receiver will act in a way that is at odds with what the source wanted (Burgoon, 1995).

The results lead me to believe that participants did not see these secrets as a negative violation of expected behavior. Many people would call these inappropriate disclosures and might assume that they would lead to the other person being uncomfortable, not knowing how to respond, or responding negatively. That did not happen, which raises the question, "why?" It is possible that although these secrets could have been interpreted as inappropriate, this population saw the secrets as pushing the relationship toward more openness. This finding is counterintuitive, but it is indeed possible that the participants did not see the disclosures of the "secret" as inappropriate. They may have simply seen the person as trying to strike up a conversation and as having shared something personal. Siegel and Burgoon (2002) suggest "that by violating a receiver's expectations in a message, an orienting response will be created. This response will lead to increased focus on the message content" (cited in, Campo et al., 2004, p. 454). This orienting response and increased focus may have produced a complimentary sharing of information, in which the relationship became more open.

This study found that participants did in fact feel a shift in the openness-closedness dialectical tension and that the relationship shifted toward being more open. The study also found that participants reported a change in their secondary goal structure after this shift had taken place. However, participants did not report any changes in their

primary goals. Instead, the study found that the driving force, or primary goal that participants had in the interactions, remained constant. This could be for several reasons, including the context in which these interactions transpired.

While the context allowed me to manipulate the openness-closedness dialectical tension, it also framed the interactions in a way that led to a majority of participants, and a majority of the responses to questions about goals, to be focused on conversational harmony (interaction goals). Relational dialectics suggests that context heavily influences any interaction that transpires (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 26) in addition to goals (Shepherd, 1998) and privacy (Petronio & Kovach, 1997). The fact that this was an initial interaction between strangers may have influenced the primary goals of the participants to be heavily focused on maintaining conversational harmony.

Social norms and an awareness of one's self-reports could have also played a large part in the consistency of answers participants reported among primary goals. Identity goals had the lowest ranking of scores, which shows that the participants did not feel as strong of a need to discuss their core beliefs, values, or morals. This makes sense in an initial interaction as much of the conversation that transpires is around small talk. Small talk would be defined in this case as topics that are socially appropriate for an initial interaction that takes place at school (e.g. the weather, classes, living situation, etc.). It was surprising that individuals rated their apprehension or arousal management goals so low, which may be because participants did not want to admit that this situation made them nervous. The fact that they were giving a self-report in a face-to-face setting may have influenced their responses to questions about being nervous or concerned about

the conversation. Being nervous about a situation is embarrassing and admitting that nervousness is even more embarrassing. Therefore, it may be that this goal would not be reported as the primary goal even if, in fact, it were.

Implications for Goals Research

This research adds a new paradigmatic voice to the existing body of goals research. Previously, goals research was conducted primarily from the functionalist or positivist paradigm. The current study continues to draw conclusions by generalizing about the ways that relational dialectics affect goal structuring, but also delves into individual participants' experiences through the framework of a social constructionist and dialectician.

From within this framework, a dialectical tension emerges in the findings about goals. The interconnectedness and multiplicity of simultaneous goals is apparent in goals research, and we know from experience that as one goal changes, we often have others that change as well. While this has been shown repeatedly in research (MacGeorge, 2001; Dillard & Schrader, 1998), the current study also shows that goals can shift independently from one another. The secondary goal of arousal management significantly decreased after the dialectical shift; however, it was the only goal that had such a change. Thus, changes in one goal did not necessarily affect other goals that participants had.

From these findings, scholars can deduce that participants believe they can accomplish the same primary goal with varying strategies. If the driving force in an interaction remains constant, but people are trying to achieve the purpose of that driving

force in different ways, people must understand that there are different means of achieving that goal. This analysis and these data show that there is both an independent and dependent nature to people's goals.

While there was a change in secondary goal structuring, there was no change in primary goal structuring. These data show the stability in participants' primary goals and point to the fact that a dialectical shift may have little influence on someone's primary goal in a situation. Participants consistently reported the same primary goal throughout the various recall points. Although individual participants consistently had the same primary goal, time did affect what primary goals the group as a whole were having. Within the four recall points an interesting set of results emerged. At the first three recall points, participants had a variety of responses that led to significant differences in the primary goal they were reporting (although people's primary goals stayed the same over time, the group had significant differences in what goals were reported). At the first recall point significant differences were reported in the goals people had, $\chi^2(4) = 16.581$, $p < .05$. At the second recall point, there were again significant differences in participants' primary goals $\chi^2(2) = 7.800$, $p < .05$. Likewise, at the third recall point participants still had significant differences in their primary goals $\chi^2(3) = 10.000$, $p < .05$. But at the fourth recall point only three primary goals were reported: interaction goals, personal resource goals, and relational resource goals. And at this recall point, an even distribution was found in each category $\chi^2(2) = .200$, p = ns. Since participants agreed that the relationship was becoming more open, these results suggest that identity goals

and arousal management goals are not the driving factor in an initial interaction when the relationship is becoming more open.

These results also demonstrate that the types of primary goals individuals have in an initial interaction may vary among three main types. Although the primary goal that participants reported within each recall point had significant differences, the primary goal that individual participants reported between each recall point did not. This would lead us to believe that primary goals may be more stable than secondary goals during conversations. As mentioned earlier, it is likely that the context of an initial interaction between strangers plays a major role in the stability of the primary goal. Throughout each of the separate stimulated recall points, participants reported interaction goals as the most common goal, with 51 of the total 121 responses to the primary goal question being coded as interaction goals. Although these results point to the fact that primary goals are more stable than secondary goals, this may also be because of the context in which these interactions were framed. Participants were told that the interaction would be for approximately five minutes. If a participant knew the interaction was lasting for five minutes, and that they may or may not ever talk to this person again, it makes sense that their goal would be to keep a "normal" conversation going for five minutes until the experiment was complete.

This research also supports the need for self-reports in assessing data. It was interesting to see how the perceptions held by the confederate and by myself were different than what someone self-reports. For instance, there was one conversation that had many silences – ones that I would label as awkward. However, the participant during

the stimulated recall sessions did not rate interaction goals very highly ($M = 1.5$), which means that she was not concerned about conversational harmony, and seemed to think that this was a normal conversation. Her self-reports added an important voice to the discussion and analysis of these results that otherwise would have been incorrectly assessed.

While this study adds to extant literature on goals and answers some questions, new questions also arise and present opportunities for future goals research, which shall be discussed below.

Implications for Relational Dialectics Research

This research shows the impact that telling a secret can have on a relationship. In a mere five minutes participants felt that the relationship had changed to become more open as the secret was shared. It only took five minutes in a structured environment, with a tape-recorder present, and participants still felt that a relationship was developing.

The secondary goals structure changed after the turning point in the study and confirmed the hypothesis that goal structuring changes when the openness-closedness relational dialectic changes. These data demonstrate a two-way causal relationship between changes in relational dialectics and changes in secondary goals; however, there is no evidence to support a relationship between relational dialectics and primary goals. Unlike primary goals, these data support the fact that people can consciously cause shifts in dialectical tensions. The difference probably lies in the fact that a relational dialectic is based upon a shared relationship and upon at least two parties. In other words, it takes the participation of at least two people to have a relational dialectic. A primary goal on

the other hand is the goal of an individual participant. These data suggest that it is easier to alter our own actions than it is to alter the goals another individual has. The fact that an individual can purposely alter relational dialectics has implications for relational research. This means individuals can alter communicative patterns that are transpiring between people in an effort to create change. If a couple is arguing, one relational partner can alter the openness-closedness dialectic in an effort to change the patterns they are co-creating.

Through the method used in this study I have been able to empirically test changes in relational dialectics. This is an important step because much of the dialectics research to date has been very abstract and theoretical (Kinser, 2003). Finding methods that allow for quantitative measurement of a dialectical shift advances relational dialectics and the applicability of findings in current theory. Take the following conversation for example. The confederate starts the interaction by displaying closed behavior that erects privacy boundaries. He gives one-word answers, is non-engaging, and does not ask questions of the other. The participant is feeling the awkwardness that comes from this sort of communication, which can be seen through the pause and uncomfortable laugh in his 10^{th} line. Then the turning point and shift in the dialectical tension takes place. It is easy to see the change in discussion and almost feel the change in energy in the conversation, but would be harder to quantify if we were not able to measure the shift in goals that took place.

PARTICIPANT: This your first year?
CONFEDERATE: Uhmhm

PARTICIPANT: What made you move to the bay?
CONFEDERATE: Uhm school.
PARTICIPANT: What's your major?
CONFEDERATE: Huh?
PARTICIPANT: What's your major?
CONFEDERATE: Political science.
PARTICIPANT: Political science huh?
CONFEDERATE: Yeah.
PARTICIPANT: Lawyer?
CONFEDERATE: Uh, who knows.
PARTICIPANT: My cousin just graduated in political science…down south…Pepperdine
CONFEDERATE: Yeah…
PARTICIPANT: Yeah, I heard it's really hard to get a job unless you want to be a lawyer or teacher. I guess the kind of thing you have to...[pause]
CONFEDERATE: Yeah…
PARTICIPANT: I'm in to economics myself. So I'll see.
CONFEDERATE: Alright.
PARTICIPANT: Hu – ha [pause…uncomfortable laugh]. I have no idea…so you like school?
CONFEDERATE: Yeah.
PARTICIPANT: That's cool. How many units you taking?
CONFEDERATE: Huh?
PARTICIPANT: How many units you takin?
CONFEDERATE: Not that many.
PARTICIPANT: I'm taking 14…I'm a little worried about finals and when they hit you all at one time.
CONFEDERATE: Yeah.

Conversation continues in the same style until this turning point:

CONFEDERATE: I went to some good parties around here actually. I like the whole scene. Parties are good.
PARTICIPANT: Yeah,
CONFEDERATE: [interrupting] Yeah actually met a chick one of the first parties I went to. She's awesome. Met her the first night I was here and it's worked out ever since. Had a wild night, sex all over the place, her room, her roommate's room while she was gone, the kitchen. It was awesome!
[after pausing]
PARTICIPANT: Was it a frat party?
CONFEDERATE: Naw just an off campus party
PARTICIPANT: Off campus party
CONFEDERATE: Yeah – house party. Heard about it through some other kids on the football team.

PARTICIPANT: Ah, you play football?
CONFEDERATE: Naw. I did – I was going to but not in this division. Probably could have played, but just didn't you know.
PARTICIPANT: Yeah. You ever go to the city? Good parties there. That's where I usually like to go to get away from here.
CONFEDERATE: Yeah, not yet. I like it here – this is still all new to me cause I just moved here you know. That's one big thing I like about moving out here. Everything's new and exciting.

This example was chosen since it fits the overall results obtained from this study. The participant's primary goal throughout the entire conversation was to "have a good conversation" with the confederate, which is an interaction goal. Table 3 shows this participant's goals before and after the turning point:

Table 3.

Participant's goal structure before and after the turning point.

	Before Turning Point	After Turning Point
Identity	4.5	5.0
Interaction	5.0	2.5
Personal Resource	3.0	2.0
Relational Resource	1.5	1.0
Arousal Management	1.5	1.0

This example demonstrates how a participant had a stable interaction goal as their primary goal, had an increased report of the identity goal, and decrease in the report of every other goal. We can also see from this example where the shift in the openness-closedness dialectical tension happened and how it could be measured.

Relationships are inherently emotion-laden so it follows logically that changes in relational dynamics would affect goals that pertain to emotions. To examine changes in

relational dialectics, this study shows that a researcher should measure changes in goals that are related to emotions. It may be found in future research that secondary goals always have some sort of shift in the goal structuring, but until then researchers studying relational dialectics would be best served by examining changes in the arousal management goals that an individual has.

Limitations

While the context of this study allowed for the manipulation of the openness-closedness dialectical tension, it also framed the interactions in a way that made participants highly aware of the need for a good conversation. Responses that reported the importance and need for conversational harmony dominated the participants' thoughts. While these findings furthered research in both goals and dialectics, the results are also limited due to the context. Generalizations about the relationships between goals and relational dialectics should not be made about all interactions in any context until further research lends more support to these findings.

This study added a new paradigmatic viewpoint to goals and relational dialectics research, however further examination is still needed. Even though participants were encouraged to add comments at any point, even if it was not one of the stimulated recall points, nobody did. Further examination and more thorough interviews with each participant would have helped in explaining the intricacies of these results. For example, I am unsure of what participants meant when answering the question "Do you feel the relationship is changing?" Participants may have interpreted the question to mean is the relationship progressing or growing? Do you feel that the relationship is strengthening?

The participants may have also thought this was simply an initial conversation, which could have greatly influenced their views of the communication. The conversational norms for initial interactions may have made much of this conversation routine so that even while the relationship was changing participants may have felt like it was a normal change. The framework of an initial conversation calls forth certain behavioral norms. People may have a more limited set of communicative choices that are deemed appropriate during this sort of interaction. To avoid embarrassing themselves, people stick to topics that fit into the framework of an initial interaction between strangers (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Both research and common sense remind us that people tend to focus on topics in which there is a high probability of shared experiences.

The fact that the participants had to listen to their own responses and make retroactive recall statements can also be seen as a limitation. Research has shown that people recreate realities in their minds and retroactively justify behavior so that it coincides with their worldview (Pearce, 1994). This may have lead participants to rate arousal management goals differently than they would have if they filled out a questionnaire with no identifying information after the interactions took place.

It is interesting to ponder how the participants' responses would have been different if the confederate was the one who did the stimulated recall session. I had hoped that when I conducted the interviews, participants would be more honest in their responses, saying things like, "he was just so hard to get along with," or "he was a terrible conversationalist," which is something that probably would not be shared with the confederate if he was the one doing the stimulated recall sessions. On the other hand,

participants may have had a greater desire to explain their statements if they were interviewed by the confederate after the interactions.

The greatest limitation of this study was that the coding of the primary goals was done using the same categories as the secondary goals. The qualitative analysis could have produced more insights if an emergent method of coding were used, such as grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This could have offered more insight into the conversations that transpired.

Grounded theory uses techniques such as open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, which could have produced a richer analysis of participants' primary goals. Open coding focuses on answering the question, "What is this about?" by fragmenting ideas in to the various nouns and verbs that a person uses in describing the subject of interest. By focusing on the noun that describes the subject of interest, a researcher can examine what adjectives are used to describe that noun (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 78). Richer categorizations can be found through this technique since a category of "friendship" is not all that is found through the coding of a statement such as "I thought he could be a good friend." Instead, researchers can further fragment the categorizations of why this person would make a good friend and what participants are looking for in a friend. Axial coding examines relationships among the coded data. The purpose moves beyond coding the data, to discovering the relationships among various categories of the answers people report. Selective coding also looks for relationships among categories, but instead identifies the "core" idea, or "core" category, and relates all the other categories to this one. Selective coding has the assumption that a core concept is always

underlying all other categories and seeks to define the core category and its relationship to other categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This assumption of there always being a core category that other categories are related to seems parallel to the idea of there always being a relationship between primary and secondary goals. Therefore, selective coding could have produced a rich analysis of data that could have given more insights into participants' behavior, the changing relational dialectics, and changing goals.

Implications for Future Research

This study found that changes in relational dialectics are related to changes in secondary goal structuring. However, the study did not find primary goals to change as the openness-closedness dialectic did. In assessing relationships between these changes in goals and dialectics, future research should focus on the nature of the dialectical change. It is possible that primary goals are also affected by changes in relational dialectics, but that the dialectic must have a change that is larger in degree, or that more time must pass with the altered dialectic before the primary goal changes. It may simply take longer to change a primary goal than it does to change the parameters someone has while trying to accomplish that goal. Surely the degree of the dialectical shift plays a role in these changes. We can imagine that a drastic change in relational dialectics should change someone's primary goal immediately, but that a small change in the dialectics would have to continue for a greater period of time to affect the primary goal someone has. Future research could explore a relationship that looked something like: degree of dialectical shift + duration of time that has passed after the shift = changing primary goal. It is possible that there is also a multi-staged causal relationship such that changes in

relational dialectics cause changes in secondary goals, which in turn lead to changes in primary goals. In assessing how changes in relational dialectics affect changes in goals, future research should test the type of change within the dialectic and the effect on goals.

Relational dialectics studies have examined varying dialectics and the strategies people use in managing those dialectics. Kramer (2004) found that dialectics are sometimes managed by a group of people and sometimes managed by the individuals within that group. In assessing goals and dialectics in unison, results from this study would lead me to believe that primary goals may be managed by the individual, whereas both relational partners may manage secondary goals. In assessing how dialectics are managed in relation to goals, researchers may very well see that the structuring of goals are related to what Baxter and Montgomery (1996) called *praxical improvisations.*

Individuals experience and live with multiple dialectical pressures in everyday life. However, people deal with these pressures in different ways. Baxter and Montgomery (1996) offered a self-admitted, incomplete list of eight strategies people use when negotiating relational dialectics. These were denial, disorientation, spiraling inversion, segmentation, balance, integration, recalibration, and reaffirmation. These strategies are labeled praxical improvisations by Baxter and Montgomery since they are the methods of determining how to practically deal with these multiple, contradictory pressures, all while being caught in the moment. Although I did not ask participants to classify their experiences into these categories and did not do so myself, future researchers can continue to make interpretations as to what strategies are used by participants during interactions.

Future goals and relational dialectics research could focus on relationships between praxical improvisations and the goals an individual has. Since praxical improvisations are identified as the ways that people deal with contradictory forces, we should be dealing with them in a way this is consistent with our goals. Below is a preliminary analysis of these two areas in question. In this conversation, the participant reconciles the competing forces using spiraling inversion. This can be seen as the participant cycles between building off of commonalities and isolating the confederate by making fun of him and his background.

CONFEDERATE: Hello…Steve
PARTICIPANT: Nice to meet you. What are you a sophomore, junior?
CONFEDERATE: Freshman
PARTICIPANT: Freshman! Freshman! You don't look like a freshman! Really you don't look like a freshman!
CONFEDERATE: Freshman
PARTICIPANT: Yeah, freshman. What do you think I am?
CONFEDERATE: Uh junior
PARTICIPANT: Naw, sophomore…I know I look old, but I don't look that old yet [laughing]?
CONFEDERATE: Yeah – I'm the same way.
PARTICIPANT: You, you commute here?
CONFEDERATE: Right off campus.
PARTICIPANT: You live off campus?
CONFEDERATE: Yeah, how about you?
PARTICIPANT: I live in Gilroy
CONFEDERATE: Uhh…
PARTICIPANT: Gilroy…You know where that is [laughing]? Down that a way [still laughing]
CONFEDERATE: I just moved out here from the east coast not too long ago so
PARTICIPANT: Oh really, where'd you live before?
CONFEDERATE: Maine
PARTICIPANT: Maine! Maine, Maine's boring.
CONFEDERATE: It is kinda boring.
PARTICIPANT: Isn't it? What do you got to do in Maine?
CONFEDERATE: Not much to do…drink.
PARTICIPANT: Drink, drink, party…
CONFEDERATE: Yeah, yup.

PARTICIPANT: No clubs and everything cause Maine's...
CONFEDERATE: I'm not 21 yet either.
PARTICIPANT: What about the cities in Maine? The cities big or what?
CONFEDERATE: No
PARTICIPANT: Nope.
CONFEDERATE: It's a lot bigger here.
PARTICIPANT: San Jose's pretty big.
CONFEDERATE: Yup.
PARTICIPANT: You have to take Maine in contrast to Gilroy, cause I thought Gilroy was boring, but Gilroy's better than Maine [laughing]. But Gilroy's not that great either though. I mean all we got there's outlets. That's it. Outlet malls and that's about it.
CONFEDERATE: Yup.
PARTICIPANT: It's a boring place. How old are you?
CONFEDERATE: 19
PARTICIPANT: 19.
[silence]
Later…
PARTICIPANT: It's probably such a culture shock.
CONFEDERATE: It is.
PARTICIPANT: What about like the movies, the small town, everyone knows everybody
CONFEDERATE: It is
PARTICIPANT: Kinda like Friday Night Lights! Kinda like that?
CONFEDERATE: Exactly. Everybody knows everybody, like Friday Night Lights around the old football team, everybody else knows you, all the old football coaches
PARTICIPANT: Yep
CONFEDERATE: Yeah small tow [interrupted]
PARTICIPANT: Cause you see all these movies and it's all
CONFEDERATE: Yeah
PARTICIPANT: Dude, they know everybody
CONFEDERATE: [speaking at the same time as the confederate's upcoming line] Yeah, yeah, it's small town America, so it's not, it's nothing that exciting
PARTICIPANT: That's pretty cool though
CONFEDERATE: [speaking at the same time that participant says previous line] it gets old – [only person speaking now] it's cool cause everyone knows you
PARTICIPANT: It's relaxing you know cause over here you'll never, you don't have that
CONFEDERATE: Exactly, so I kinda like that part of it.

The participant's behavior can be seen here as cycling between openness and asking questions that invite responses, to changing to closedness by making statements that could be seen as abrasive and insulting.

He starts by stating "nice to meet you" and asking "how old are you", which shows he would like to engage in conversation. He then switches to laughing at the confederate for guessing that he is a year higher than he really is. The participant then switches back to inviting participation in the conversation by asking, "You, you commute here?" Next he laughs at the confederate for not knowing where Gilroy is. He then asks another inviting question of, "Oh really, where'd you live before?", but quickly switches back to closing the conversation by making fun of where the confederate moved from when stating, "Maine! Maine, Maine's boring." The participant then tries to build off of commonalities by stating that Gilroy's boring and making empathic statements such as "It's probably such a culture shock." An interesting dynamic has developed between the two by this point. After speaking with the confederate about this conversation, he stated that he was anticipating the participant's next verbal attack and trying to diffuse it before it started when he states "Yeah, yeah, it's small town America, so it's not, it's nothing that exciting" and was surprised to hear the participant state, "That's pretty cool though." The confederate then can be seen changing his stance toward Maine to reflect what the participant's viewpoint was, when in the same breath he changes the whole focus of the statement from "it gets old" to "it's cool cause everyone knows you."

From the results found in this study, we may hypothesize that spiraling inversion may be used when a participant's primary goal stays the same, but the person's secondary goals change. In actuality this participant stated that his primary goal was to build a relationship with the confederate, but he also had different primary goals throughout the interaction. His primary goal shifted between interaction and relational resource goals.

We can assume that an interaction goal may have been the primary goal when the participant was making awkward statements to try and keep the conversation going, but that relational resource goals were the primary goal when displaying empathic behavior and discussing commonalities. Future research could focus on these strategies that are used and the actual goals that participants have while using these methods of managing dialectical tensions. Practical implications could arise if training programs could be developed to help individuals recognize when they use the less functional improvisations (denial and disorientation) and how they could change these behaviors to incorporate more functional ways in their communicative lives. Future research should also continue to examine dialectical tensions from within *both* a positivist paradigm *and* an interpretivist paradigm. This study was able to provide useful generalizations about changes in relational dialectics and goals, but it can be seen from the last example that the generalizations are not applicable to all participants' experiences.

This study provides evidence that goals and relational dialectics do have a causal relationship. Past research has also shown that the goals individuals have relate to their behavioral choices. Therefore, future research should investigate whether we can alter the behavior of others by altering relational dialectics. While this seems like common sense, these findings also give scholars another tool to understand the behavioral choices people make. These behavioral choices should be examined to understand our goals, and what praxical improvisations we use in managing dialectical tensions. We constantly enact behaviors that are chosen from a plentitude of behavioral choices dictated by our goals and the multivocality of pressures we feel in every situation. A dialogic approach to

examining communication helps to bring a more holistic and comprehensive analysis of what it means to be human. Without a greater understanding of communication and the intertwined nature of psychological, relational, and sociological forces that communication plays a major role in, we fail to understand what makes each of us who we are. Communication creates the intertwined nature of our lives and through it we build our values, attitudes, beliefs, relationships, and social awareness. By better understanding these components of everyday living, researchers will be able to better understand communication and the ways in which it creates, destroys, and alters our realities in life.

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Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

1. What past experiences led you to say the last thing that you did?

2. Has something like this happened to you before?

3. What do you think the other person was thinking at this time?

4. What was your primary goal at this time, or what were you trying to accomplish?

On a scale of 1 to 6, 1 being extremely easy, and 6 being extremely hard:

5. How difficult was it to keep the conversation going?
    a. Were you thinking about what to say next?

On a scale of 1 to 6, 1 being not at all, and 6 being very much so:

6. Were you worried about looking cool?

On a scale of 1 to 6, 1 being not at all, and 6 being very much so:

7. Do you feel like you were acting "like yourself? The opposite would be acting differently than you do around your true friends.

On a scale of 1 to 6, 1 being not at all, and 6 being very much so:

8. Were you trying to gain anything out of this interaction (i.e. a friend? Knowledge about something? Etc.)?
    a. What were you trying to gain?

On a scale of 1 to 6, 1 being not at all, and 6 being very much so:

9. Were you worried about saying something that might offend the other person?

10. How did you think the other person was going to respond to what you just said?

11. How open are you being with this person as compared to most people you meet? More, less, or the same?

12. As compared to earlier in the conversation, are you being more, less, or the same in how open you are?

13. How did the interaction that just transpired affect your relationship with this person?

Appendix B: Coding Sheet

1. What past experiences led you to say the last thing that you did?

2. Has something like this happened to you before?

3. What do you think the other person was thinking at this time?

4. What was your primary goal at this time, or what were you trying to accomplish?

ID	INT	PR	RR	AM
T1___	T2___	T3___	T4___	

On a scale of 1 to 6, 1 being extremely easy, and 6 being extremely hard:

5. How difficult was it to keep the conversation going?

T1___	T2___	T3___	T4___

On a scale of 1 to 6, 1 being not at all, and 6 being very much so:

6. Were you worried about looking cool?

T1___	T2___	T3___	T4___

On a scale of 1 to 6, 1 being not at all, and 6 being very much so:

7. Do you feel like you were acting "like yourself? The opposite would be acting differently than you do around your true friends.

T1___	T2___	T3___	T4___

On a scale of 1 to 6, 1 being not at all, and 6 being very much so:

8. Were you trying to gain anything out of this interaction (i.e. a friend? Knowledge about something? Etc.)?

a. What were you trying to gain?

T1___	T2___	T3___	T4___

On a scale of 1 to 6, 1 being not at all, and 6 being very much so:

9. Were you worried about saying something that might offend the other person?

T1___	T2___	T3___	T4___

10. As compared to earlier in the conversation, are you being more, less, or the same in how open you are?

Appendix C: Codebook

Identity Goals

1. I wanted him to like the true me. I hate when people are fake and wanted him to know who I truly am.

2. He should know that I don't want any part of that. Not only because this is tape-recorded, but because I can do my own good work without getting a copy of someone else's test.

3. I don't really like meeting new people. I'm kind of an introvert – I just don't really like being in these situations and wanted him to know that.

Interaction Goals

1. I don't really like meeting new people. I'm kind of an introvert, so it was hard to keep the conversation going. I usually open up around friends, but not right from the start.

2. I wanted our conversation to seem normal. It's a weird setting to have everything you say tape-recorded, but I didn't want it to mess up our conversation.

3. I knew the conversation would be over soon, so I just wanted it to keep going like it was for a little while longer.

Personal Resource Goals

1. He seemed like a cool guy, but I was just doing this to get some extra credit.

2. History sucks and it's not something I'm going to use anyway. Lots of frats and sports teams have tests that they show each other so I just wanted to get a quick peek at it. If the teacher doesn't change their test and it's out there circulating, I don't see why I can't look at it.

3. Maybe his girlfriend has some cute friend she can introduce me to.

Relational Resource Goals

1. He seemed a little shy or nervous, so I wanted to help him loosen up.

2. I don't really like meeting new people. I'm kind of an introvert, so I didn't want him to feel like I was ignoring him. He seemed nice and all – I just don't really like being in these situations.

3. There's a lot to do in San Jose that I thought he should know about, and since he's new to the area he probably doesn't know. Figured I'd tell him about some.

Arousal Management Goals

1. It's a weird setting to have everything you say tape-recorded. I didn't want to sound stupid or say something stupid.

2. I get kind of nervous whenever meeting someone and I didn't want him to know I was uncomfortable.

3. I got a little angry that he'd put me on the spot like that. At the same time I knew the whole thing would be over in a minute, so I just wanted to finish